

HMP Dartmoor

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	52266
Name of lead inspector:	Montserrat Pérez-Parent, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Category C Prison
Address:	Princetown Yelverton Devon PL20 6RR

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 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP).

Themes

What actions have leaders and managers taken to ensure that the provision provided by the college and other subcontractors is evaluated accurately?

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have been too slow to evaluate the performance of subcontractors. They have only recently started the evaluation of the education, skills and work provision delivered last year. As a result, leaders and managers do not have a full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision provided by the college and the information, advice, and guidance (IAG) service. Leaders and managers acknowledge that they have not gathered enough information on the quality of education they deliver to evaluate the provision effectively.

Leaders and managers do not have effective processes in place to evaluate the quality of the information, advice, and guidance that prisoners receive. Their plans to introduce monthly performance management meetings focus on evaluating data rather than on the quality and impact of interventions. Leaders and managers do not routinely sample the plans that IAG staff produce or observe their practice.

Leaders and managers evaluate the curriculum offer effectively. They frequently review it to ensure that it is relevant to the sectors of growth within the prison resettlement areas and the changing needs of the prison population. For example, leaders and managers have introduced an employability course and hold discharge boards to ensure that prisoners who are released directly from HMP Dartmoor receive the support they need to prepare them for release well.

What actions have leaders and managers taken to ensure that prisoners' time is purposeful and that they are allocated to the appropriate activities, which they should be able to attend punctually?

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not provide enough activity spaces for the prison population. They are currently struggling to recruit staff and have not been able to reintroduce all the courses that were providing before the COVID-19 pandemic. The

list of prisoners waiting to join courses is long. At the time of the monitoring visit, just over 35% of prisoners were not able to take part in education, skills, and work activities. Although the college is now fully staffed, there is no cover in place for staff leave or sickness, which impacts on the continuity of learning.

Pay is equitable between education and work. Leaders and managers have removed barriers that discouraged prisoners from attending education, skills, and work activities. For example, they have shortened the afternoon regime to allow those attending off-wing activities time for domestics and gym before their evening meal.

Prisoners receive a comprehensive induction to the services available at the prison. As part of this, IAG staff identify the most suitable activity for each prisoner given their previous experience and their future goals. The few prisoners who can join off-wing education, skills, and work activities, attend well, and arrive to their activities on time.

What actions have leaders and managers taken to support the development of prisoners’ English and mathematics skills and ensure that instructors can assess and record the skills that prisoners develop while at work?

Reasonable progress

Prisoners on mathematics courses make quick progress in learning and developing new skills. In level 1 mathematics lessons, prisoners enjoy their lessons and participate enthusiastically. Teachers explain new concepts clearly and enthuse prisoners, so they are engrossed in their learning. Prisoners produce work and calculations which are mostly correct. They are positive about their learning and confident that they will do well in their exams.

Bricklaying and painting and decorating tutors record the development of prisoners’ practical and theoretical skills effectively. They set useful targets for prisoners to help them understand the skills they have developed and to ensure that they know what they need to improve. As a result, these prisoners can describe the new skills they have learned both in their vocational subject and in English and mathematics.

However, leaders and managers have not established a formal approach for prison instructors to develop further prisoners’ existing English and mathematics skills. Workshop instructors do not record the skills that prisoners develop in workshops. In the Braille, textiles and desktop publishing workshops, prisoners quickly develop useful skills that enable them to produce work to a high standard. For example, prisoners in the Braille workshop complete recognised qualifications that enable them to produce Braille versions of books and other documents. Prisoners working in the textiles workshop learn the different aspects of producing high-quality clothing for an external contract.

What actions have leaders and managers taken to ensure that prisoners' achievements on low performing courses are improved, holding reliable performance data for the education, skills, and work subcontractors?

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers still do not hold reliable performance data for the education subcontractor. As a result, they are not able to identify low-performing courses effectively or challenge college leaders to bring about actions to improve them.

College leaders and managers do not systematically collect and analyse course performance information and prisoner feedback to identify any underperforming courses. They are not able to tackle the root causes of why prisoners studying on some courses are not performing as well as others.

Leaders and managers at all levels acknowledge that the way in which they record and discuss performance information at their monthly performance meetings does not allow them to drive improvements in an effective and timely manner. Very few actions arise from these discussions. When leaders and managers identify actions, these carry over from one month to the next without any challenge or explanation on why there has not been any progress.

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