

HMP Whitemoor

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Allan Shaw, Ofsted Inspector

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 September 2022

Type of provider: Adult prison

Address: Longhill Road
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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 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP).

Themes

What actions have leaders and managers taken to introduce an appropriate vocational curriculum to meet the needs of prisoners, which they engage with and attend well without disruption from other activities?

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have not ensured that prisoners are able to attend lessons and work roles frequently in order to learn. Since the return to normal timetable arrangements earlier this year, chronic staff shortages have led to very frequent and extensive closures of workshop and classes. As a result, prisoners only attend lessons and workshops for around a quarter of the allotted time and therefore do not develop good knowledge and skills.

Leaders and managers have not extended the vocational curriculum enough to meet the needs of prisoners. Men have too few opportunities to develop the skills they need to meet their career aspirations. Courses in construction have been withdrawn. Music technology and art studies were without staff to teach them at the time of the visit. A few new courses have been introduced, such as business enterprise, and progression from level 1 to level 3; now available in three subjects.

Leaders have not ensured that prisoners are sufficiently prepared to gain employment on eventual release. Too few skills that prisoners learn in prison-led workshops and industries are accredited. An employability skills award is being introduced but only a handful of prisoners are currently benefiting.

When activities are open, men who attend take part positively and are keen to learn. Nevertheless, attendance at activities which are open remains too low.

Leaders and managers have ensured that disruptions to learning for attendance to other activities and appointments are minimised. Suitable arrangements for prisoners' prayers and attendance at the gymnasium have been put into place.

What actions have leaders and managers taken to ensure that they monitor the quality of education and the way that tutors help prisoners to make good progress, ensuring that the provision delivered by the college and other subcontractors is evaluated accurately?

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that prisoners make good progress. Leaders and managers have failed to provide frequent lessons, workshops or work activities. The frequent closures mean that prisoners often forget what they have learned which slows their progress on their return to class or work areas.

Prison leaders do not use data sufficiently to plan, monitor and the education, skills and work curriculum. Managers have been slow to provide the help needed for the many prisoners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). As a consequence, too many prisoners with LDD do not make good progress. Leaders and managers have only recently introduced measures to assess and monitor the quality of teaching and assessment in prison-led activities. These measures have yet to have a positive impact.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that prisoners receive appropriate help to plan their education, skills and work activities that will help them achieve their future career goals. The subcontracted Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) provision, has been without staff for many months. While leaders have successfully performance managed this underperforming contractor, leaders have not ensured that prisoners have good access to the information they require to make informed choices about their future.

The quality of education provided by the education provider is frequently monitored by leaders and managers. Lesson observations of education staff, many of whom are recent appointments, are thorough. As a result of these observations, education staff have received training and support in identified areas of development. Consequently, staff are better able to support prisoners.

What actions have leaders and managers taken to ensure that prisoners continue to develop their skills and knowledge, including the improvement of their written work?

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have not ensured that prisoners develop good skills and knowledge. The closure of education and industrial workshops for most of the time available has greatly restricted the progress that prisoners can make.

In prison-led workshops, leaders and managers do not have a clear picture of the progress most prisoners make in developing their employability or vocational skills. Most instructors do not use the prison's progress review procedures frequently or consistently to monitor prisoners' progress or to help prisoners to improve.

Consequently, for most prisoners, any progress they make is not acknowledged and instructors do not take action to intervene where there are concerns.

Too few prisoners have current progress targets in order to give them clear guidance for improvement. Prisoners' skills development leading to roles of higher responsibility is not adequately recorded or celebrated.

Leaders are committed to improving the standard of prisoners' written work. However, it is too soon to see the impact of leaders' actions in prisoners' work.

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