

HMP Spring Hill

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	52328
Name of lead inspector:	Rebecca Perry, His Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	13 to 15 February 2023
Type of provider:	Adult Prison
Address:	Grendon Underwood Aylesbury Buckinghamshire HP18 0TL

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

<p>What actions have leaders and managers taken to ensure prisoners receive a sufficiently detailed plan outlining what education, skills or work they need to progress during their time at the prison or to prepare them for their release, including the appropriate information, advice or guidance?</p>	<p>Reasonable progress</p>
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Leaders have effectively reviewed induction and information, advice and guidance at the prison. Staff swiftly and carefully assess prisoners' existing skills, knowledge and interests to establish their needs and employment aspirations. Prisoners receive effective guidance about their future career goals, and actions to achieve them. Prisoners are well informed about their options for education and work, including opportunities through release on temporary licence (RoTL).

Leaders have recently put in place useful prisoner employment plans. Staff use these plans to set targets for progress to RoTL and into employment. As a result of these plans, communication between most prison functions has improved significantly. However, due to a recent significant rise in the prison population, there is a backlog in reviews. Consequently, staff do not yet have oversight of the progress that prisoners make towards achieving their career goals.

Prisoners benefit from the services available to them in the prison's employment hub and virtual campus resource. Staff provide a range of helpful services for prisoners to find and secure employment, including through supervised open internet access. Staff signpost prisoners to additional learning opportunities such as asbestos removal certification. Consequently, leaders report that almost half of prisoners remain in employment six weeks after release.

Leaders establish very good relationships with several supportive employers. Employers chair and attend the prison's Employment Advisory Board to ensure improved quality and sustainability of employment opportunities for prisoners.

Through these relationships with employers, leaders have successfully run bootcamps for prisoners to gain qualifications, such as heavy goods vehicle license.

Too many prisoners still wait too long to be approved for RoTL due to delays caused predominantly by external factors. A minority of prisoners in internal work roles express frustration at the time it takes for RoTL to be approved. However, all prisoners are allocated to work or education internally while they wait, and those in education particularly value the opportunity to learn and gain qualifications in the meantime.

What actions have leaders and managers taken to provide sufficient places for prisoners, in particular for those with low levels of English and mathematics? Reasonable progress

Leaders ensure that all prisoners are allocated to education, skills and work, including a high proportion on RoTL, and that all are in full-time roles. Consequently, no prisoners are unemployed.

There are sufficient spaces at all levels of English and mathematics for the population that require it. A higher proportion of prisoners are allocated to English and mathematics than at the previous inspection. Prisoners who require English and mathematics qualifications access education promptly. They engage in well-planned, individualised learning programmes. As a result, most prisoners achieve these qualifications.

Leaders have put in place an appropriately broad curriculum through education, subcontracted provision, enrichment activities and internal and external work opportunities. The curriculum is sufficiently flexible to take account of individuals' needs, talents and experience, including at level 3 and higher education. Prisoners accessing Open University courses and attending university through RoTL has increased significantly since the previous inspection.

However, leaders and managers have not ensured that there is sufficient breadth in vocational training. Only plumbing, carpentry and catering are available to small cohorts through the education provider. Leaders ensure that the curriculum includes a range of additional accredited opportunities to support prisoners' employment prospects through external delivery partners. For example, forklift training, employability courses, coaching qualifications, recycling programmes and rail track. However, due to limited spaces, too many prisoners who cannot access RoTL, wait a long time to gain valuable skills that will help them to gain employment.

Leaders do not offer sufficient accredited learning for prisoners in prison-led work areas. Only WAMITAB in waste management, and food hygiene in kitchens are available. Most cleaners are not qualified and there are no training or qualifications available to them. Those cleaners that are qualified came into the prison with these qualifications, having gained them at other prisons.

What actions have leaders and managers taken to eradicate the excessive variation in the quality of teaching across education, skills and work, supporting tutors to help them to improve their skills? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders in education have put in place a full and effective quality assurance process since the previous inspection. They monitor quality closely, intervene quickly when improvements are needed, and review the impact on quality of their interventions effectively.

Managers in education provide a breadth of professional development for staff to improve their teaching skills. Most teachers recognise how their practice has improved. For example, in helping prisoners to read in mathematics and providing ongoing, helpful feedback to prisoners.

Teachers make use of prisoners' aspirations and interests to motivate them in their subjects. They plan activities linked to prisoners' goals to bring their subjects to life. For example, in mathematics, resources are used in a range of subjects such as music and construction. In business, topics are linked to real employment, such as cost price margins for chefs.

Most prisoners gain valuable skills and knowledge that will benefit them in the future. For example, in bookkeeping, prisoners learn how to accurately reconcile accounts. Prisoners in catering prepare and produce foods to a commercial standard. In most prison-led activities, prisoners gain valuable employability skills such as team working and work without supervision, remaining purposefully engaged in their work.

Leaders have been too slow to put in place actions to improve prison instructors' teaching skills. While prison instructors are due to join education provider staff in observation training soon, there has been too little professional development for instructors since the previous inspection.

Leaders have established progress tracking systems in most prison-led work areas. However, staff do not use 'Progress in Workshop' tracking documents to provide challenging targets for prisoners. They list tasks prisoners complete and too few instructors set goals for prisoners to develop new skills and knowledge. In the kitchens, there are no systems in place to recognise and record prisoners' progress.

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