

HMP Hewell Grange Reinspection

Adult Learning Inspectorate Inspection Report 7 April 2006

Reinspection date

31 May 2007

Inspection number

300703

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- grade 1 – outstanding
- grade 2 – good
- grade 3 – satisfactory
- grade 4 – inadequate

Description of the provider

1. HMP Hewell Grange (the prison), formerly a country mansion, is a Grade 2 listed building near Redditch in Worcestershire. The main building, used to accommodate the offenders, lies in extensive grounds with ornamental gardens, woodlands, market gardens and a lake. The establishment became an adult category D open prison in 1991. It has an operational capacity of 187 offenders, with a population of 167 at the time of inspection.
2. Generally, the prison does not accept offenders with convictions for crimes such as arson and sex offences. However, a number of offenders are categorised with serious violence offences. At the time of inspection, six offenders were serving life sentences. Typically, offenders are serving between a minimum of three months and a maximum of two years. In recent months a growing proportion are admitted to serve the last few weeks of their sentences. Most offenders transfer from closed category prisons in the West Midlands.
3. The governor has been in post at the prison since April 2004 and also has responsibility for governing nearby HMP Brockhill. Operational and strategic management of learning and skills at the prison and HMP Brockhill is carried out by the head of learning and skills. He is a member of the senior management team.
4. Under new funding and management arrangements since August 2006 education is contracted to City College Manchester and the contract for information advice and guidance is held by Carter and Carter. The prison provides vocational training as part of work activities across a range of occupational areas. A resettlement to work scheme enables around a third of the offenders to work with employers in the community. Several offenders attend local colleges to gain vocational skills and qualifications.

Grades

grade1= outstanding, grade 2= good, grade 3= satisfactory, grade 4= inadequate

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		3

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Agriculture</i>		
Other government-funded provision	9	4
<i>Horticulture</i>		
Other government-funded provision	11	4

Engineering and manufacturing technologies		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Transportation</i>		3
Other government-funded provision	8	3

Information and communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ICT for users</i>		2
Other government-funded provision	29	2

Preparation for life and work		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		
Other government-funded provision	53	2
<i>Independent living</i>		
Other government-funded provision	21	2
<i>Employability training</i>		
Other government-funded provision	52	2

Grades awarded at reinspection

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Agriculture</i>		
Other government-funded provision	6	3
<i>Horticulture</i>		
Other government-funded provision	4	3

About the reinspection

5. The reinspection of agriculture, horticulture and animal care provision covered occupational training in the prison's farms and gardens, and associated classroom learning. No other aspects of the prison's learning and skills provision were inspected or graded. At the previous inspection the quality of provision in agriculture, horticulture and animal care was inadequate. At reinspection the quality of provision in this area was satisfactory. At the previous inspection the overall effectiveness of the provision was satisfactory. Following the reinspection this remains unchanged.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	3
Number of learners interviewed	8
Number of staff interviewed	8
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of visits to the provider	2

Areas of learning

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Agriculture</i>		
Other government-funded provision	6	3
<i>Horticulture</i>		
Other government-funded provision	4	3

6. Of 20 offenders currently working in the prison's farm and gardens, six are following programmes leading to externally accredited qualifications in agriculture, and four towards qualifications in horticulture. Of the remainder, two are working towards butchery qualifications.

Strengths

- High success rates
- Good opportunities for the development of employability skills
- Well structured accredited training
- Good range of facilities and resources

Weaknesses

- Inadequate arrangements to review learners' progress
- Insufficient promotion of accredited training
- Insufficient recognition of non-accredited learning
- Incomplete quality improvement arrangements

Achievement and standards

7. Success rates are high. All learners who started a land-based course leading to a nationally recognised certificate between June 2006 and April 2007 have successfully completed their programme. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when achievement rates were low.
8. Opportunities for learners to develop employability skills are good, a strength maintained since the previous inspection. The prison provides a wide range of short competence-based accredited training programmes. Learners gain useful skills in agriculture and horticulture. They successfully develop generic employment skills such as team-working, problem-solving, time-keeping and maintaining appropriate standards of work. Overall, the standard of learners' work in occupational areas is satisfactory.

The quality of provision

9. Accredited training is well structured. This was a weakness at the previous inspection and has been rectified. Detailed and appropriate schemes of work exist for all programmes leading to accreditation. Staff routinely use standardised well designed lesson plans, and make effective use of very good learning materials to aid learning. The prison has recently provided staff with good professional development in planning and developing training programmes.
10. Arrangements for initial assessment and induction are satisfactory. At induction, staff and learners agree an initial individual learning plan, setting out the interests of the learner. This information is used appropriately when the prison's labour allocation board assigns offenders to work activities.
11. Arrangements to review learners' progress are inadequate. When starting a programme leading to accreditation, learners complete a learner agreement, setting out what they are to do. Learners do not have an opportunity to formally review their progress towards these goals during the programme. Staff do not set or monitor interim goals for learners to achieve within a clear timescale.
12. The prison does not sufficiently promote its accredited training. A wide range of nationally recognised tests of competence, relevant to the needs of industry, are provided. Much of what is offered is listed in the new detailed prison prospectus for education and training. However, since June 2006, only 18 learners have completed an assessment. Learners are not sufficiently aware of the accredited training available. The prison gives learners responsibility for organising their own learning, but does not provide a schedule of training and assessment to help them do this. Few learners with low levels of literacy and numeracy take up training the prison offers to improve these skills.

Leadership and management

13. Facilities and resources are good. The prison has an estate of over 240 hectares of which about 120 hectares are farmed. It is one of only two prisons nationally to retain a commercial farm. It provides a particularly appropriate setting for learning. Learners work with a wide and varied range of animals, many of which are rare breeds. Market garden facilities used in horticulture learning are extensive, and include open and covered cropping. The grounds, sports fields and woodlands provide good settings to develop estate maintenance skills. Improvements to the facilities since the previous inspection include a new well resourced classroom in the horticulture area, and the development of a small centre for butchery training. Staff have very good occupational experience and appropriate qualifications. Many are nationally recognised assessors for the industry specific tests of competence the prison offers. They have a good understanding of the tests and their requirements.

14. Learners do not receive sufficient recognition of their non-accredited learning. When working on the farm and horticulture units they routinely undertake training as part of their daily work. The skills they achieve are recorded in prison service personal training records. However, learners have little awareness that this activity is classed as training or of their success in gaining new skills. They do not have a record of these achievements which they can use when seeking employment on release. As at the previous inspection, the prison rarely uses the frequent opportunities that work presents for offenders to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. The prison has recently introduced appropriate arrangements for some learners to gain accreditation for the wider key skills they develop at work. However, it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

15. The prison has made useful improvements to the provision since the previous inspection, particularly in raising levels of achievement and the structuring of learning. Self-assessment is now carried out on a regular basis. Inspectors' findings matched the grade in the report. Action-planning has focused closely on remedying identified weaknesses, although some targets for improvement are not sufficiently precise. Collection and evaluation of learners' feedback has improved, and action follows where appropriate. However, arrangements for quality improvement are not complete. The prison does not have a programme of session observations to monitor standards and contribute to the development of the quality of teaching, training and learning in this area. Staff do not sufficiently share good practice with colleagues across the prison.

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