

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Springhill

24 July 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, **or**
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Springhill

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Key findings	2
What learners like about HMP Springhill	6
What learners think HMP Springhill could improve	6
Key challenges for HMP Springhill	7

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	8
Equality of opportunity	9
Quality assurance	10
Information & communications technology	12
Foundation programmes	14

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Springhill is an open prison for men situated near the town of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. The prison is adjacent to HMP Grendon, which is a male Category B prison that operates a unique regime of therapeutic care. Many of the prison's administrative functions are operated jointly with HMP Grendon. HMP Springhill is in a rural setting, with accommodation centred around a large house that was built as a family home in 1872. The prison was opened in 1953, and was the first open prison in the country. It caters for Category D prisoners, focusing on resettlement. It has an occupational capacity of 336 and currently there are 316 prisoners. Most prisoners are serving sentences of between four and ten years, although the prison does have some lifers who are nearing the end of their sentence. Forty per cent of the prison population is from minority ethnic groups. Education is subcontracted to a local college of further education which offers full- and part-time courses, predominantly in literacy and numeracy, information and communications technology (ICT) and social and life skills. Other subjects are also offered, including printing. The prison offers basic employment and teaches a range of skills on-site. These include industrial cleaning, painting and decorating, and work in its production workshop, kitchen, and farms and gardens. Other employment opportunities exist for prisoners in the community, and almost half the prison population works outside the prison. There is little formal accredited training, although five prisoners working in the kitchen are taking a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 1 in food preparation and cooking. The prison's gym accommodates recreational activities, but does not offer accredited training courses.

2. The senior management team is led by a recently appointed governor who has overall responsibility for both HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill. The head of inmate activities is responsible for vocational training and employment, education and workshops. The day-to-day management of the education department is carried out by an education manager. There are a further four full-time staff in the education department. The other education staff are employed either part-time or on short-term contracts. Education is provided for 112 prisoners. Some of the programmes were not inspected as there were too few learners. The education manager meets the head of inmate activities every three months to review the education contract.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

3. There are 44 learners on ICT training programmes in the education department. They are working towards either an entry level certificate in word processing, or a basic computer literacy qualification. One classroom in the education department is dedicated to computer training. The number of hours each learner spends weekly in education varies to meet individual needs. There are four members of staff teaching ICT. Key skills are taught separately.

Foundation programmes

4. The education department provides a narrow range of foundation programmes. There is training in literacy and numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), business start-up, social and life skills, and open learning for university courses. Learning takes place in the main education centre for most learners. Prisoners take part in a week-long induction programme on arrival at HMP Springhill to identify their basic skills needs. During this process they are informed of the educational programmes on offer and undergo an initial assessment. Thirty-five per cent of the 42 learners on foundation programmes are below level 1 in literacy and 49 per cent are below level 1 in numeracy. Support is offered during the follow-up interview, but take-up of classes is poor with only 5 per cent of those identified at the initial assessment stage taking the education option.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	21
Number of learner interviews	53
Number of staff interviews	15
Number of subcontractor interviews	18

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. HMP Springhill's leadership and management are unsatisfactory as is the provision for quality assurance. The arrangements for equal opportunities are satisfactory. The quality of learning on ICT and foundation programmes is unsatisfactory.

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. Retention and achievement rates are difficult to calculate because of inadequate data. **Learners on foundation programmes produce good work.** Most ICT learners are working to a satisfactory standard, although they are using old computers without industry-standard software.

Quality of education and training

7. **The quality of education and training observed was satisfactory or better.** On foundation programmes, teaching is good, although technology is not used creatively to develop learning. All learners make steady progress. The self-esteem of most learners is

considerably enhanced by the quality of teaching and support. There are, however, few qualifications available to enable formal accreditation of learners' skills, and no qualifications at level 3 or above.

8. **Education and training on programmes in ICT are unsatisfactory.** Learners are effectively supported by staff who give good individual coaching. Teaching is often unstimulating and there is little emphasis on group work or other activities. There is a narrow range of programmes available for learners, with no opportunities to progress above level 2.

9. **Education and training on foundation programmes are unsatisfactory.** Teaching is good or better and most learners' work is of a high standard. The learning programmes are not clearly planned to meet the literacy and numeracy needs of learners, although these are identified at initial assessment.

Leadership and management

10. **The leadership and management of education and training are unsatisfactory.** The senior managers have a clear focus on strategic planning and setting the direction of education and training. They have recognised some of the key issues identified by inspectors. There is good operational management in both education and training which leads to good teaching, learning and achievement. Resources are well managed but there are insufficient funds to support adequate staff and curriculum development. Although there is a broad range of vocational skills where training is to a high standard, there is no accreditation of training other than in catering. This has an adverse effect on learners' resettlement opportunities.

11. The prison carried out its first self-assessment of education and training immediately before the inspection. The process involved all the key staff involved in learning and skills training. Learners' views were also sought. The self-assessment report was comprehensive and self-critical although a number of strengths were overlooked or understated. There is good management awareness of the changes needed to bring about improvements, and there are clear action plans both for departments and the prison as a whole.

12. **There is weak management of literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes.** There is no basic skills co-ordinator. Initial assessment data are not communicated to teachers, instructors, or to others who support learning, only to staff providing basic skills classes. There is little structured support for literacy, numeracy or ESOL learning outside the education department. There is no retention data for basic skills learners, and dyslexia screening is not available.

13. **Quality assurance is unsatisfactory.** There is no overall quality assurance framework for the prison. The education department has clearly written quality assurance procedures but these are for college use and do not translate well into a prison context. Learners' views are not always routinely sought. The observations of teaching and learning carried out during the past year have been inadequate. Assessment and

HMP SPRINGHILL

verification within the education department is satisfactory. Internal verification of vocational training is good and the outcomes of external verification have been shared with assessors.

14. There is a strong focus on the promotion of equality of opportunity in the prison. A few posters are displayed and equality of opportunity is reinforced at learners' induction. There is some good use of data and the allocation of education opportunities is fair. Jobs in the workshop, farms and gardens, and kitchen areas are assigned fairly, with good progression opportunities from simpler activities and tasks to the more complex.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear focus on strategic planning and direction of education and training
- good promotion of equal opportunities

Weaknesses

- inadequate accreditation of training
- poor progression opportunities
- poor use of data in development planning
- inadequate quality assurance of education and training

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good individual teaching

Weaknesses

- narrow range of courses
- inadequate learning resources
- ineffective course management

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- high standard of learners' work
- good pastoral support

Weaknesses

- lack of training in skills for employment
- insufficient use of ICT to support foundation courses
- inadequate target-setting for learners
- poor support for learners with additional learning needs

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HMP SPRINGHILL:

- the good, supportive staff
- the safe environment
- the good quality and range of food

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HMP SPRINGHILL COULD IMPROVE:

- the availability of education and training above level 2 - there is not enough
- education and training for short-term prisoners
- the access to courses outside of the prison - it should be easier
- the library
- the education provision in the evenings for those in full-time employment
- the access to the gym and the quality of the facilities
- the number of vocational skills courses

KEY CHALLENGES FOR HMP SPRINGHILL:

- develop a coherent and comprehensive quality assurance strategy and procedures
- offer more accreditation across the range of training provision
- provide a wider range of programmes and courses
- develop a coherent ICT curriculum strategy and improve resources
- the integration of basic and key skills with vocational training
- the collection, and better use, of data in development planning

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

15. The leadership and management of training are unsatisfactory, as is the provision for quality assurance. The arrangements for equal opportunities are satisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- clear focus on strategic planning and direction of education and training
- good promotion of equal opportunities

Weaknesses

- inadequate accreditation of training
- poor progression opportunities
- poor use of data in development planning
- inadequate quality assurance of education and training

16. There is a clear focus on strategic planning. The new strategic plan effectively sets the direction of the prison's education and training provision and imparts clear values to the management team. The amount prisoners are paid to attend educational programmes is to be increased to raise the profile of education and encourage more inmates to take part. Managers have recently focused on improving education, vocational training and training for work. They have secured funding to develop teaching facilities for horticulture and to provide a multi-purpose learning resource centre with computers and internet access. This centre will be used for the new accredited generic preparation for work programme which is planned for October, and for a proposed evening job club. A plan has been prepared to develop physical education (PE) provision, and a PE instructor has been recruited. The strategic plan has been written jointly for HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill. Funding is jointly allocated and key performance targets are set jointly. However, a recent review of the management structure has effectively focused attention on HMP Springhill's needs.

17. There is responsible financial management of the education and training provision at HMP Springhill. The education department is required to produce a weekly report. This is checked against the key performance target for classroom efficiency by the head of regimes. A monthly report is reconciled against invoices received for teaching hours to monitor expenditure against the educational contract. The funds for resources and materials are amalgamated for both HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill. HMP Springhill does not receive its own separate annual budget, although efficient and effective use is made of resources. Satisfactory targets are set for classroom efficiency and for

achievement of the basic and key skills. Targets for other accredited learning are insufficiently specific. There are clear mechanisms for formal communication between all staff through regular minuted meetings. These meetings lead to action which effectively impacts on learners.

18. There is inadequate accreditation of training. A satisfactory range of training is offered in horticulture, industrial cleaning, painting and decorating, and maintenance but none of it is accredited. The 2003-04 strategic plan sets general targets to increase accreditation. There is some accredited training available in catering and food preparation, but only five of the prisoners working in the kitchens and the prison mess are following national vocational qualifications (NVQ) programmes. Two of these are unable to start their programmes until they have been allocated to community work. An Open College Network accredited programme is offered to prisoners in the print workshop, but the lack of up-to-date equipment and machinery prevents effective NVQ training. No training is currently offered in the gym. The facilities here are poor, with some old and dirty equipment. A significant proportion of HMP Springhill's population attends daily community work but this does not include any planned training or accreditation.

19. Opportunities for progression in education and training are poor. There are only two programmes offered in ICT, neither of which is above level 2. All new prisoners are tested to establish their levels of competency in basic skills. Priority is given to those with literacy and numeracy learning needs. There is a lack of co-ordination between education and training, and key skills training is not integrated with other work. Educational provision for prisoners on short sentences is unsatisfactory. However, there are some short, flexible accredited programmes, such as the small business course, which effectively cater for learners' needs. There is inadequate provision to enable those with existing qualifications to progress beyond level 2. Only two prisoners currently attend full-time education outside the prison. One prisoner is taking a university course by distance learning.

20. Poor use is made of data in development planning. A database has been developed to hold basic information on learners. This includes information on learners' ethnic background, qualifications on entry, basic skills test scores and achievement. No information is collected on additional learning or social needs. Data are not analysed to provide management information on overall retention, achievement and progression, to measure and monitor performance, or meet development planning needs.

Equality of opportunity

21. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The prison has clearly written equal opportunities and race relations policies and is developing a diversity policy. There are two committees that deal effectively with issues relating to equal opportunities. The complaints procedure is satisfactory, and deals promptly with any complaints from prisoners. Learners are given clear information on equal opportunities during their induction, although this is not reinforced or checked thoroughly during programmes.

HMP SPRINGHILL

22. Data are collected on learners' age, nationality and ethnicity but are not used to monitor rates of participation or success. There are good opportunities for prisoners from many faiths to worship at the prison, with a Buddha Grove and prayer rooms for Muslims and Jews. A variety of dietary needs are catered for with Halal food for Muslims and vegan or vegetarian options available as standard menu items. All prisoners at HMP Springhill are either working in the community or have the opportunity for education and training. Approximately 80 per cent of the prisoners need help with literacy and numeracy, and although this help is available to all, few take it up. There is little provision for learners with severe physical disabilities due to the restrictions of the site, but the prison service places such prisoners in establishments with more appropriate accommodation. Access to the gym is poor and it is only open for a few hours each evening with no arrangements to cover staff absences. Access to the library/reading room is also poor. Opening hours are limited, and there is a poor range of learning materials. All prisoners have good access to education, although low pay discourages participation, and the inadequate number of evening classes restricts access among those who work outside the prison during the day. The senior managers recognise these issues and have clear plans to deal with them.

23. Most education staff have recently carried out diversity training, and prison staff have all had training in equal opportunities. There was good attendance for this training in spite of the difficulty of covering staff absences. Staff have a clear understanding of diversity and equality of opportunity. There is a high level of respect between prisoners and staff, and movement around the prison and between education and training areas is not constrained by regimes.

Quality assurance

24. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory. Self-assessment in the prison is new and the first report was completed immediately before the inspection. The self-assessment process was thorough and included the views of all key staff and learners. Although the report provided some clear judgements, many of the strengths identified were considered by inspectors to be either statements of fact or normal practice.

25. The prison does not have an overall quality assurance policy or procedures to monitor the quality of education and training. However, the prison quality improvement group meets regularly to discuss topics such as self-assessment, staff training and learners' achievements. Members of this group include staff from the education department as well as prison staff involved in training, although the focus of discussion tends to be on processes rather than the quality of provision. The education department has a clearly written quality assurance policy, although the procedures are for college use and do not clearly apply to the prison context. Some procedures are not fully understood by staff. A few observations of teaching and learning in the education department have recently taken place, although these are poorly recorded and in some cases consist simply of discussion with the tutor. There is no clearly recorded action-planning resulting from this. A survey is carried out once a year to elicit the views of learners but this does not match the processes described in the college's quality assurance document. The results of the most recent survey were thoroughly analysed,

but no clear use was made of the results to help improvements. Learners taking short programmes such as basic food hygiene are not given an opportunity to feed back unless their course is running when the annual feedback survey is carried out. The performance of education staff is appraised annually and reviewed every six months, although there is no systematic approach to staff training and development. The quality of action-planning and recording of some individual learning plans and reviews is poor. Insufficient checks are made to ensure the quality and consistency of all paperwork.

26. In the areas where vocational training is accredited, the internal verification process is thorough and well recorded. Staff involved in assessments and verification have access to external moderator's reports and have changed their practices where necessary to improve the quality of provision. There are no procedures in place to quality assure the vocational training that is given either in the prison or in the workplace where prisoners carry out community work. Staff development is not clearly co-ordinated, and apart from recent equal opportunities training, there is little planned staff development in education.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

27. The quality of learning on ICT programmes is unsatisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good individual teaching

Weaknesses

- narrow range of courses
- inadequate learning resources
- ineffective course management

Achievement and standards

28. Learners increase their skills and knowledge of information technology (IT). Staff support and encourage learners in their work. Attendance at classes is generally good. Most learners arrive punctually and work diligently. Achievement of qualifications is difficult to calculate because there is insufficient meaningful data. On completion of a level 2 qualification learners are unable to progress to higher level awards or more specialised ICT learning. There are no programmes available for learners below level 1.

Quality of education and training

29. Work is regularly marked and feedback given, although teaching strategies and learning opportunities are not always designed to meet individual needs. With group teaching, learners are not exposed to a wide range of learning techniques and there is insufficient group work, research and note-taking. Staff are experienced and well qualified.

30. Assessment is carried out to a satisfactory standard. Initial assessment is carried out on all learners in the education department. There are only two qualifications available to learners in ICT. One is a basic introduction to word processing and the other a basic computer literacy course. The latter has a number of modules which can be certificated separately. The topics covered include word processing, spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing, and graphs. The facilities for ICT are poor with some old computers and some software packages that are not current industry standard. This prevents learners from reaching high levels of competency. However, within these limitations, in

all the learning sessions observed learners worked to a satisfactory standard on different software packages at different stages.

31. Support for learners in class is good. Most training is given individually and planned to ensure that learning opportunities fit in with learners' other activities. Many learners have had no formal education for many years. Staff are aware of their particular needs, encourage them to learn at their own pace and provide feedback when tasks are completed.

Leadership and management

32. There is unsatisfactory curriculum and course management. There is no comprehensive ICT strategy to improve the provision and resources. Lessons are not clearly planned. Course reviews have not taken place regularly and course teams do not have regular formal meetings. Any issues and complaints from learners are dealt with promptly, although they are not recorded.

33. Each learner has an individual learning plan (ILP) although some lack detailed action plans and targets. ILPs are not clearly linked to sentence-planning. A daily summary is used effectively at the end of each session to record work done.

34. All learners use commercially produced learning materials for independent study as part of their programme. These are inappropriate for learners whose English is poor. Key skills are not integrated with ICT programmes, but are taught separately.

Foundation programmes

35. The quality of learning on foundation programmes is unsatisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- high standard of learners' work
- good pastoral support

Weaknesses

- lack of training in skills for employment
- insufficient use of ICT to support foundation courses
- inadequate target-setting for learners
- poor support for learners with additional learning needs

Achievement and standards

36. The key performance targets for basic and key skills learners at both HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill have been met. Separate data for HMP Springhill are not available. Data are not collected in a way that enables information to contribute to decisions. Staff were unable to present meaningful data on learners' achievements in basic and key skill. Retention and achievement rates cannot be easily determined. Tutors encourage learners who pass the adult numeracy and literacy test at level 1 and 2 to progress and produce portfolios of evidence to achieve the key skills qualifications. Attendance rates at basic and key skills classes are good.

37. Learners' portfolios contain work that demonstrates a high level of attainment and clear progress. One learner was observed being assessed on a short talk as part of the level 2 communications key skill. He had produced a well-designed set of overhead slides, clearly written cue cards and a handout. Good progress is being made and learning is clearly taking place. For example, one learner commented that his letters home had improved significantly.

Quality of education and training

38. Planning for the business start-up course and on the social and life skills course is satisfactory. Course and lesson-planning account for the wide variety of individual learners' needs and interests. The needs of more able learners are met effectively, although no attempt is currently made to identify preferred learning styles.

39. Learners benefit from good pastoral support. The considerable mutual respect between tutors and learners promotes learning. Staff are aware of the personal problems learners face, and are highly responsive to their individual needs. They are strongly committed to helping learners achieve their potential. Some of the learners have had no formal education for many years and many have had unpleasant experiences of learning. Learners are very positive about the support they receive and the impact on their achievements and self esteem.

40. Assessment of foundation courses is satisfactory. The internal verifier for key skills checks all portfolios of evidence and gives feedback to the tutor. Learners have files of marked work and activities which include feedback on their achievements. Assignments are marked regularly and feedback is given.

41. The programmes do not include the development of personal, social and vocational skills. There is no provision for the development of skills for employment or for jobsearch activities. Education staff have designed a preparation for work course which will be introduced at learners' induction. Tutors prepare and use schemes of work and lesson plans, although many of these are generic and contain insufficient detail on teaching and learning methods.

42. There is insufficient use of ICT to support learners on foundation courses. Basic skills classes take place in rooms that have no IT equipment. Key skills learners share one computer which does not have up-to-date software. There are insufficient textbooks and other learning resources to meet the needs of the learners. There are few paper-based teaching and learning materials, although the quality and appropriateness of the resources ranges from good to poor. Some of the reading books are outdated and childish, and some worksheets poorly written.

43. Learners agree a programme that is appropriate to their needs and overall targets are recorded on their individual learning plans. Topics are itemised but there is little detailed comment to identify measurable milestones. Learning plans are not standardised and the literacy and numeracy plans are not always linked to the core curriculum. Tutors use the learning plans in different ways and there is no sharing of good practice.

44. ILPs are not reviewed effectively. There are inconsistencies between tutors. Progress reviews are not sufficiently evaluative and lack detail. There is no link between ILPs and sentence plans. Progress reviews are not used effectively to update the ILP or to set targets.

45. Initial assessment at induction identifies learners' basic skills needs. The tests are inappropriate for learners who have achieved qualifications at above level 1. Learning difficulties and disabilities, for example dyslexia, are not routinely identified or responded to. Many basic skills learners require additional individual support but have to wait their turn during classes while the tutor deals with others. Learners have individual interviews to follow up and feed back on their initial assessment. There is insufficient promotion of foundation courses and the benefits of attending classes at induction.

Leadership and management

46. Data are held on learners' initial assessment and qualifications on entry, and information is collected on their progress towards key performance targets and their achievements. However, the data are not collected in a way which is useful for evaluation of retention and achievement rates, and are not used in planning courses. Data from HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill prisons are combined and are not useful to identify trends or to make improvements to provision. Staff meetings are held every two weeks and are clearly minuted, although some staff do not attend regularly.

47. Staff are supported in their training needs, although their files are not updated regularly to include completed training. Course review files are maintained for basic and key skills programmes but are not quality assured. There is an effective internal verification system.