

REINSPECTION REPORT

HMP Bedford Reinspection

10 August 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas. 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.*

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
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Bedford (the prison) is a local category B adult male prison, situated near the centre of Bedford. The prison was opened in 1801 and was enlarged in 1849. The building used for education and physical education (PE) was constructed in the 1970s, and in the early 1990s further expansion provided a new gatelodge, house block and healthcare centre. Since the previous inspection in January 2004 the prison has had its operational capacity increased from 464 to 494. At the time of reinspection the prison's population was 483. The prison serves the courts in Bedfordshire and the adjoining counties, with 65 per cent of offenders coming from within 50 miles of the prison. The number of offenders being received from north London and south Hertfordshire has increased during the past year, raising the proportion of the prison population who come from minority ethnic groups from 22 per cent to 31 per cent. Most offenders are transferred to other prisons, or released, after a relatively short period of time. The typical length of stay at the prison is around four months.

2. The main education contractor, Matthew Boulton College, Birmingham, provides part-time courses for 120 learners in information and communications technology (ICT), literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), key skills and social and life skills. Support in literacy, numeracy, ESOL and key skills is delivered on the residential wings, the kitchens and contract service workshops and in PE. The range of learning courses has increased since the previous inspection and over 100 learners are now engaged in programmes outside education. Bedford College delivers accredited one-day courses, in customer services, selling skills, and conflict handling skills, in the contract service workshops and basic food hygiene training in the kitchens. Training courses in industrial cleaning, delivered by prison officers, were introduced in July 2004. Key skills training in communication and application of number is now an integral element of two accredited PE programmes. External voluntary organisations provide training in employability skills and personal effectiveness.

3. Operational and strategic management of all learning and skills is carried out by the head of prisoner activities, learning and skills and resettlement. She is a member of the senior management team. The area of learning reinspected was hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. Leadership and management were inspected and reported upon within the context of the area of learning.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

4. Learners take part in a range of PE activities, including weight training, badminton, short tennis, circuit training, cardiovascular training and some minor sports. The department has recently introduced short courses in basic weights and an introduction incorporating key skills level 1 qualifications in communication and application of number

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respectively, and an Open College Network (OCN) healthy living course. These activities form part of a structured PE programme managed by a senior PE officer and supported by three PE officers. One of these officers was absent on long-term sick leave at the time of the reinspection. Two gym orderlies assist with the cleaning, preparation and maintenance of facilities and equipment.

5. Recreational PE sessions are timetabled to provide all accommodation wings with equal opportunities to use the facilities. These sessions are available during weekdays, on three evenings and on Saturdays. The PE department offers separate sessions to cater for learners with special needs. The weekly number of offender-hours for PE has been increased by over 30 per cent since the previous inspection. All new offenders are given information on PE facilities and courses as part of the induction programme as well as 'taster' sessions. PE information is posted on designated noticeboards in all residential wings.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of inspectors | 2 |
| Number of inspection days | 7 |
| Number of learners interviewed | 12 |
| Number of staff interviewed | 17 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 1 |
| Number of visits | 3 |

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. At the previous inspection in January 2004 the quality of provision was found to be adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Programmes in ICT and foundation were satisfactory, as was leadership and management and equality of opportunity. However, PE programmes and quality assurance were found to be unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, PE was found to be good and arrangements for quality assurance have been improved. The quality and standards of all other aspects of HMP Bedford's provision have been maintained.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

| Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel | | 2 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas: | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Other government-funded provision | 12 | 2 |

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- high achievement and retention rates
- very good programme introduction arrangements for new offenders
- good teaching practices

Weaknesses

- inadequate staffing levels

Achievement and standards

7. Achievement and retention rates are good on all courses. The good pass rates identified at the previous inspection have been improved and the number of qualifications achieved monthly has tripled since the previous inspection. The retention rate has been maintained at over 85 per cent and all learners completing their programmes have achieved a qualification. Since the introduction of accredited courses in April 2005, 111 learners have completed courses in basic weights and introduction to fitness and achieved level 1 key skills qualifications. A further seven learners have achieved OCN-accredited qualifications in healthy living. All learners have high attendance records, and punctuality is good. Prison managers place high importance on learning and skills as part of resettlement strategies and they timetable courses to avoid clashes with other regime activities, such as family visits and medical appointments.

8. Learners acquire good practical PE skills which they use well in course activities and during recreational sessions. They use the PE facilities with confidence and have a good understanding of a variety of training methods in weights and cardiovascular training. The learners are well motivated and enjoy their PE programmes. They demonstrate the knowledge and personal skills required for future working in leisure and fitness establishments following release.

Quality of education and training

9. The effective arrangements for induction identified at the previous inspection have been maintained. Induction and introduction to PE programmes are very good and now extend to all new offenders. Staff are enthusiastic and give presentations which motivate learners to engage in PE activities. For example, 'taster' sessions have been introduced during which learners are taught to use the equipment strictly within health and safety guidelines. Learners are fully informed of courses, facilities and enrolment procedures and are given a tour of the department. PE staff work in conjunction with the prison's diversity manager in the routine use of interpreters for foreign national learners with communication difficulties. Initial interviews are used effectively in the completion of health screening forms and the development of individual learning plans. Following successful completion of the introduction programme learners are issued with PE identity cards, which they must produce each time they use the gymnasium.

10. The PE department has very good links with the education department which offers comprehensive additional learning support to those on PE programmes. For example, the two departments work well together to use the findings of initial assessment tests for literacy and numeracy when planning support for offenders. Interviews with learners are conducted and support programmes are agreed. While some learners attend discrete support sessions, others receive individual support from a teacher on the accommodation wings. The PE staff work closely with the prison's key skills co-ordinator to include key skills teaching in the sports courses.

11. Instructors demonstrate good teaching practices and the good practical teaching identified at the previous inspection has been maintained. In one session, for example, learners are given useful coaching tips and sound advice on how to improve their personal performance. In another session, health and safety information was given within the context of the sport and leisure industry and the instructor illustrated points with reference to real-life situations. Learning sessions are well prepared and learners make good progress. Instructors incorporate a variety of teaching techniques, such as practical tasks and discussions on video information, to engage and maintain the learners' interest throughout the lessons. Learning is divided into small steps to enable the learners to progress at a rate suited to their abilities, and the small group sizes for theory work enables high levels of individual support. Instructors demonstrate their ability to support and guide the learners and to encourage the less able learners, giving them more time and reinforcing learning at regular intervals.

12. Inadequate facilities were identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. The facilities remain limited in scope, with no facilities for outdoor sports, for example, but they are used efficiently and are adequate to meet the needs of a local prison. The lack of space limits team sports. The sports hall, which is too small for soccer and basketball, is used primarily as a cardiovascular training suite, with space for circuit training, badminton and soft tennis. The cardiovascular suite and the spacious weightlifting room are particularly well equipped and these facilities are well maintained. Offenders praise the fitness facilities, but regret the absence of team sports. A small classroom has been

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created from a storage area and this provides a stimulating learning environment with displays of sports information posters. Staff have produced high-quality learning materials which are interesting, informative and suited to learners' needs.

13. Assessment and monitoring arrangements are satisfactory. Assessment is planned and procedures meet with the awarding bodies' requirements. Offenders receive individual interviews to discuss progress and agree action plans, and progress review documents are used to record progress and to set realistic targets.

14. The range of PE courses, although narrow, meets the needs of the learners at the start of their custodial sentences. They also provide clear progression routes to further education college courses for those released and to more advanced PE courses for those transferred to other establishments. Employment prospects and progression routes are outlined in theory lessons in order to encourage learners to continue with their learning. The PE department has introduced a range of recreational sessions to improve the general fitness of offenders, such as sessions for the over-45s and workouts aimed at those wishing to lose weight. Employment skills are also available as part of the resettlement programme.

Leadership and management

15. Lines of communication within the department and with other prison departments are well established. For example, the PE department works particularly closely with the education department in providing additional learning support. PE staff demonstrate a good team spirit. The department has dealt with the over-reliance on informal processes identified at the previous inspection. The team now holds monthly meetings to discuss matters. Minutes of meetings are recorded, with actions and responsibilities identified. Copies of minutes are passed to the head of prisoner activities, learning and skills and resettlement. Informal discussions and actions are used effectively to deal with daily issues and these are recorded in a daily diary. Progress and achievement data is collected and used together with offenders' individual learning plans to guide learning and participation in activities.

16. Management of PE is good and the staff team clearly understand their individual roles and responsibilities. The senior officer has an open style of management and is readily accessible to the team. The team is very committed to providing a good experience for the learners and worked hard to develop new courses and the associated learning materials. Poorly planned training, identified at the previous inspection, has been rectified and programmes are now planned in response to learners' needs.

17. The staff are well qualified and experienced in a wide variety of sports and fitness-related activities. The senior officer sets high standards for staff, demanding that they are fully committed and act as good role models for the learners. However, staffing levels are inadequate and insufficient to meet demand at all times. For example, adequate arrangements are not made for covering staff sickness or absence. It has not been possible to run the full programme of courses during a recent long-term staff absence,

although the remaining staff have covered some additional sessions.

18. Arrangements for quality improvement are effective. Much has been done to improve this previously identified area of weakness. The head of PE attends the prison's quality improvement group meetings and the PE department has introduced self-appraisal procedures in line with the prison's self-assessment procedures. Collected data is analysed to identify trends and prompt action is taken in response to feedback from learners. An action plan has been developed for the PE department. Planned classroom observations are carried out by PE staff and moderated by education department staff to ensure consistency. The external verifier's reports are good and all identified action points are dealt with promptly.

19. Reinforcement of equality of opportunity for learners has improved. An equal opportunities statement is included in all learning material and awareness and understanding of equality of opportunity is reinforced during learning sessions. All prison staff have completed diversity training. The introduction of part-time regimes for activities and a pay scheme offering parity across activities has strengthened the incentives for learners to enrol on PE programmes. In PE, for example, the department has recently responded to offenders' feedback by introducing carrom, a board game, to meet the needs of Asian learners. Data indicates that the number of offenders using PE facilities has increased by 27 per cent since the previous inspection.