

REINSPECTION REPORT

HMP Whitemoor Reinspection

08 February 2007



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 aged 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
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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 effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

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*

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Whitemoor is a high security 'dispersal' prison for male adult offenders in categories A and B and its offender population is drawn from all over the UK. HMP Whitemoor was opened in 1991 on former railway land just north of the town of March in North Cambridgeshire. The prison operates at the highest security level and holds some exceptional-risk category A offenders. The prison's operational capacity is 465, and at the time of the reinspection it held 436 offenders. HMP Whitemoor does not normally accept offenders sentenced to less than four years. The prison population has a high percentage of life and high tariff sentences, often for the most serious of crimes. Three-quarters of offenders are serving 15 years or more. HMP Whitemoor is a dispersal prison but it also provides containment for some of the most serious offenders in the country and security is therefore rigorously prioritised in all practice and processes. On average, eight offenders are moved each month to other category C or B prisons. HMP Whitemoor is a modern environment with finite 'high security' boundaries, and there is little opportunity for expansion in physical accommodation or for significant additional activity.

2. In partnership with the Department of Health and the mental health unit, the prison's assessment spur examines links between dangerousness and severe personality disorder. Since 2002, an intervention spur has developed a suitable regime for the management and treatment of dangerous offenders and those with severe personality disorders. This, combined with the vulnerable persons and 'mains' communities, means that there are three distinct communities to move around the establishment using common infrastructure.

3. Education is provided by A4E. There are eight full-time and 15 part-time teachers. The role of the learning and skills activity is to replicate as far as practicable the aim towards rehabilitation and settlement common to the rest of the prison. It also intended to make a positive contribution towards security without compromising public safety.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Reinspection Grade 3

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** HMP Whitehall was inspected in full in February 2005. At that time, the overall effectiveness of the provision was inadequate. Leadership and management were inadequate as were quality improvement and preparation for life and work. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. Training in information and communications technology (ICT) and construction, planning and the built environment was satisfactory. HMP Whitemoor has made changes to the provision during the past four months. Leadership and management and quality improvement are now satisfactory, as is equality of opportunity. Training in construction, planning and the built environment is now good and training in preparation for life and work is satisfactory. Training in ICT was not reinspected.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment report produced in October 2006 involved all areas of the

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prison including workshops. The grades in the self-assessment report reflected those given by inspectors. A detailed action plan is being implemented to deal with the weaknesses identified.

6. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.

The prison has made changes to improve the provision, and a new head of learning and skills has been appointed. The capacity of the quality improvement group has increased and it is now in a position to drive forward improvements.

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		4
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		4

Construction, planning and the built environment			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Construction crafts		3	
Other government-funded provision	15	3	

Information and communications technology			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
ICT for users		3	
Other government-funded provision	35	3	

Preparation for life and work			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
ESOL		4	
Other government-funded provision	8	4	
Literacy and numeracy		4	
Other government-funded provision	102	4	

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Construction, planning and the built environment		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts		
Other government-funded provision	26	2
Preparation for life and work		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL		
Other government-funded provision	8	3
Literacy and numeracy		
Other government-funded provision	81	3

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

7. The reinspection covered the prison's leadership and management, its arrangements for quality improvement and equality of opportunity, and its provision in construction and preparation for life and work. ICT was not reinspected. Three reinspection visits were made over a period of time. The final visit lasted three days.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	11
Number of learners interviewed	21
Number of staff interviewed	8
Number of subcontractors interviewed	15

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good development of data to manage allocation and attendance
- good strategies to improve working and learning in the prison

Weaknesses

- slow response to some staff development needs
- insufficiently through monitoring of teaching and learning

Construction, planning and the built environment

Construction crafts

Strengths

- effective actions to improve the quality of many aspects of the provision
- good achievement of qualifications and skills

Weaknesses

- insufficient sharing of information at the outset of training

Preparation for life and work

Strengths

- wide range of good learning and support
- good development of social and learning skills

Weaknesses

- slow development of staff's expertise to meet some learners' needs
- insufficient co-ordination of the recording of learners' learning aims or progress

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good development of data to manage allocation and attendance
- good strategies to improve working and learning in the prison

Weaknesses

- slow response to some staff development needs
- insufficiently through monitoring of teaching and learning

8. Since the previous inspection, the prison has introduced good strategies to improve working and learning. There have been significant changes in the management of the prison, and in October 2006, a new governing governor, governor of regimes, and interim head of learning and skills were appointed. A new education subcontractor was appointed in September 2006. The culture of the prison is changing to focus on working and learning as well as on the secure estate. Managers have recognised that offenders will remain at HMP Whitemoor for a long time and that learning and work will help them to develop as individuals and gain the skills to cope with the prison environment. Staff now have access to clear data on the monthly performance of the prison. These good practices are beginning to include all training and education activities. This is having a positive effect on the morale and culture of the prison.

9. Data on offenders' activities is now produced daily. Any non-appearances are immediately investigated and reasons for absence sought. This is having a dramatic effect on the numbers attending work, training and education, and during the month before the reinspection, the attendance rate was 83 per cent, a considerable improvement. There is now good liaison between key areas of the prison, including learning and work, through a regime task force which meets fortnightly to monitor allocation to activities. The formation of a risk and management board along with the restructure of the labour board has improved the allocation of learners to appropriate activities linked to sentence planning. This was a weakness at the previous inspection and is now satisfactory.

10. Punctuality of movement through the prison is improving and is now satisfactory. Teachers still do not always challenge learners about punctuality and promptness during the learning activities.

11. Most of the changes in the prison have taken place since October 2006. Curriculum management is satisfactory. A new timetable has been produced that offers more opportunities for part-time education, along with course and content specifications and schemes of work. The interim head of learning and skills has liaised effectively with the education manager and other members of staff to move forward the improvements required. Opportunities to progress through different levels of learning are clearly available including access courses to higher education. An analysis to identify the skills needs of the offenders is taking place in March 2007, and the results will be used to plan further changes in the curriculum.

12. The prison has been slow to carry out staff development in response to the needs of learners. Although some in-house training has taken place, staff do not have enough expertise in skills for life. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. There has been some staff training in the use of individual learning plans, in teaching methods and in learning styles but all of it has been very recent and it is too early to judge its effectiveness.

13. The prison has recently begun to offer training in industrial cleaning. Currently there are eight learners working towards stage 1 qualifications in cleaning science. Training and assessment takes place in the cleaning workshop. The workshop contains good resources for learning. It has flooring areas with several different finishes on which learners can practise techniques and be assessed. One learner who has recently completed the course assists the full-time teacher. Most learners attend the workshop full time although some combine their attendance with education studies. Standards of work and achievements are good although there is no opportunity to progress to stage 2 to or work towards the food preparation area cleaning certificate. Staff development has been arranged for the teacher so that these options may be offered in the future

14. The Restorative Justice workshop was, until recently, funded by the Inside Out Trust. The workshop carries out desktop publishing projects for HMP Whitemoor and other prisons, and also produces materials for community organisations, churches and schools. Learners produce good-quality work here, supported by two teachers who are skilled in ICT and hold teaching qualifications. Currently one learner is working towards a level 1 qualification accredited by the Open College Network. Learners may attend the workshop full time for five days a week or part time. Several learners combine work with education.

15. The laundry is well resourced and fulfils a commercial function for the prison, although it does not offer any qualifications to the offenders who work in it.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

16. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Race equality impact assessments are in place for labour allocation, education, chaplaincy and the gymnasium. The prison has recognised that there has been inequality of pay, particularly for those attending education. A policy is in place to bring better parity from April 2007. There is more differentiation in learning than at the previous inspection, and stereotypical behaviour and views are challenged more often. There has been little training to bring all the prison staff, particularly those involved in education and training, to a full understanding of the equality and diversity issues involved with working with a highly diverse prison population.

17. The prison library provides a good range of books and publications, including text in foreign languages and for learners with lower levels of literacy. Learners make good use of the library, which also provides assistance with legal services. Satisfactory arrangements are usually made to allow learners of different faiths to carry out their worship and activities in a suitable facility and environment.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

18. Quality improvement is now satisfactory, as is the prison's self-assessment report. The quality improvement group was re-established in October 2006 and has just introduced a

set of standard agenda items for meetings, of which one is 'improving performance'. The self-assessment report identified that the quality improvement group needs to focus on quality and performance, and act as a verifier of change and improvement. A good cross-section of the prison's managers are key members of the group, and they have been working on the self-assessment report. Observations of teaching and learning took place a month before the reinspection, but mainly focused on teaching rather than learning. The observations graded two-thirds of the teaching as good or better. There is no moderation of the observation process and the grades were significantly higher than those given by inspectors. Individual learning plans have been introduced, but there is a wide variation in how effectively they are used, as there is with progress reviews. Many of the initiatives are very new, and there is insufficient monitoring to ensure consistency and quality.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction, planning and the built environment

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts		
Other government-funded provision	26	2

19. There are 26 learners attending the construction workshop, which offers qualifications in plastering and painting and decorating. Two full-time teachers are supported by one learner who has previously completed the course. Courses leading to accredited qualifications take an average of 16 weeks to achieve. The workshop operates flexible provision, and new learners can access training whenever a vacancy occurs. A carpentry and joinery workshop also provides qualifications, but this was closed due to staff absence during the reinspection. Staff from the education department visit the workshop for half a day a week to provide literacy and numeracy support. Six learners are currently receiving additional support and working towards qualifications at level 1.

Construction crafts

Strengths

- effective actions to improve the quality of many aspects of the provision
- good achievement of qualifications and skills

Weaknesses

- insufficient sharing of information at the outset of training

Achievement and standards

20. The achievement rate for qualifications in construction is good. Since the new education contractor took responsibility for the workshops six months ago, 84 per cent of learners who started training achieved the qualification. The development of learners' practical and personal skills is also good. Skilful tuition helps learners make rapid progress, particularly in plastering where good-quality wall and ceiling finishes are achieved after a relatively short time in learning. Similar high standards of decorative techniques are achieved by learners on the painting and decorating course. Some learners progress to work on wing painting teams after completing the course. Staff place considerable emphasis on developing learners' personal and social skills. They encourage learners to be patient and meticulous in their approach, and reinforce the importance of teamwork and planning. Good constructive feedback is given after each task and learners are encouraged to reflect critically on their work and development needs. Additional support for learners is satisfactory. Construction staff provide numeracy activities for support staff to use. This helps ensure relevance and motivate learners.

The quality of provision

21. Insufficient information is shared among staff before the training programme starts.

Learners do not always have an initial assessment of their basic skills, and if they do, the results are not routinely recorded on their individual learning plan. Staff in the workshops have to contact the education department to find out learners' literacy levels. There are significant differences in learners' literacy and numeracy, with some working at level 3 and above and others at entry level. The absence of information on learners' literacy, numeracy and language ability makes it difficult for staff to prepare appropriate learning strategies for them all. Staff do not meet learners until they attend the workshop on their first day. This gives them no time to assess learners' motivation and prior knowledge before they start, and does not allow learners to make informed decisions about their suitability for training in construction.

22. Resources are satisfactory. There is inadequate space in the workshop, and enough materials for learners to take a full part in training and assessment. Training and assessment are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

23. There has been a significant improvement in the provision since the previous inspection. Learning plans are now used and the monitoring of progress, which was a key weakness at the previous inspection, is good. Learners' portfolios record progress against qualification standards and progress reviews are used to set good targets. Internal verification has also improved, with assessors observing assessment performance as well as checking completed portfolios.

24. Staff are now supported well by managers. Lesson observations have taken place and attendance and punctuality have improved. Average attendance in workshops has increased significantly in recent months in line with improvements in regimes and the prison's increased focus on purposeful activity. Results of learner surveys are analysed and summaries fed back to staff. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The workshop has a high proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups, and courses are well promoted throughout the prison.

Preparation for life and work**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL Other government-funded provision	8	3
Literacy and numeracy Other government-funded provision	81	3

25. HMP Whitemoor currently offers learners 12 and a half hours of literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) tuition a week. Classes are timetabled for every weekday morning and afternoon. There is no evening or weekend provision. Currently, 44 learners are registered to attend literacy and numeracy classes in the main education department and nine are attending the ESOL provision. The department also runs an outreach programme. Twenty-one learners are taught in the workshop for vulnerable offenders, 12 in the workshop for offenders with severe personality disorders, and four in the close supervision centre. Individual support is also provided in the segregation unit and during sessions in the workshops. Most courses lead to national qualifications at entry level, level 1 and level 2. The subcontractor currently employs three full-time staff including a skills for life co-ordinator, and seven part-time tutors who teach an average of six sessions a week.

Strengths

- wide range of good learning and support
- good development of social and learning skills

Weaknesses

- slow development of staff's expertise to meet some learners' needs
- insufficient co-ordination of the recording of learners' learning aims or progress

Achievement and standards

26. Learners continue to develop a wide range of social and learning skills. They are offered good opportunities to increase their confidence and self-esteem. For many learners, this also involves learning to be effective learners. Many learners develop better communication skills and are able to express their opinions well in discussions. Some learners work more collaboratively on group tasks and offer each other constructive ideas. Many learners develop the concentration and patience required to complete activities. For example, learners in the creative art workshops have completed complex and detailed craft or textile projects to a good standard, and are making satisfactory progress in developing the literacy skills they need to complete the written component of the qualification. Learners on ESOL programmes develop their vocabulary well and increase their confidence in listening and speaking. Some learners who joined the education department with very low skills levels have made significant progress in developing their literacy or numeracy skills, and have used them well to support or mentor other learners. Some have developed learning materials that are used at HMP Whitemoor and other prisons, or have achieved qualifications in further and higher education. However, some learners' progress in literacy and numeracy is particularly slow, especially if they have

been assessed as being at entry level.

27. The achievement of qualifications is satisfactory. In 2006, 41 learners achieved a total of 68 national qualifications. Pass rates were very good at 93 per cent. Although attendance has improved overall, it is still erratic on some courses. For example, some learning is disrupted when learners are transferred to other provision, such as the course on enhanced thinking skills.

The quality of provision

28. The wide range of individual learning and support continues to be good. Tutors continue to work hard to improve learners' morale and often help them gain an interest in their work. In particular, the outreach provision is still used very well to overcome some learners' significant barriers to participation in education and training. Tutors provide good individual sessions and learning support to engage learners in some of the most demanding settings throughout the prison. They are particularly committed to this aspect of their work and are skilled at adapting their teaching methods and approaches to learning according to the needs of individual learners or to the special circumstances they find when they arrive at each unit. For example, each visit to the close supervision centre and the segregation unit involves careful assessment of each learner's readiness to participate in learning. Similarly, tutors use a good range of learning activities to support learners on the accommodation wings. Many learners regain their focus or increase their sense of purpose and are successfully persuaded to progress to the group sessions in the main education department. The main literacy and numeracy programmes have recently been adapted to provide a good range of individual support and meet the needs of learners who have different levels of skills or are at different stages of their programme. Most of these sessions are organised into learning workshops with two tutors who offer good opportunities for individual tuition or work in small groups.

29. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In ESOL, tutors use a good range of learning activities and structure the sessions well to meet the needs of learners at different levels. This includes good use of well-designed tutor-made learning materials. Some of the workshop sessions in literacy and numeracy are managed well. Learners work in different groups according to their levels. Tutors work well together and plan sessions appropriately to enable a flexible approach to each session. Learners who join a session for the first time receive appropriate individual support from one tutor without disruption to the activities of the rest of the group. However, some learners do not receive sufficient explanations to help them understand concepts in spelling or numeracy or to develop the most appropriate strategies to improve their independence in completing specific tasks. The literacy and numeracy provision is still based too much on a narrow range of teaching activities and worksheets, with insufficient use of contexts to motivate learners, arouse their interests and help them transfer their learning into other settings.

30. Learning resources have improved since the previous inspection and are satisfactory. Most classrooms in the main education department now provide an appropriate learning environment, and the facilities in the other rooms used for literacy and numeracy provision have also improved. Although learners use a wider range of learning materials, and make better use of computers, the computing facilities in many classrooms are still inadequate. The prison has appropriate arrangements with the subcontractor to increase the range of learning materials and improve the quality of the computing facilities by the end of this academic year.

31. Initial and diagnostic assessments continue to be used appropriately to identify some learners' levels of literacy and numeracy. There are better procedures to obtain information on the prior learning, assessments and achievements of learners who have been transferred from other prisons. However, staff do not use a wide enough range of assessment activities to check the accuracy of the initial assessments once learners have settled into their programme. The prison has identified that the provision of information, advice and guidance is not sufficiently developed. A learning support adviser has recently been appointed and is beginning to develop this service and work towards appropriate national qualifications at level 3 in information, advice and guidance. However, many learners do not receive a wide enough range of information on medium- and long-term education and training opportunities, and there are no systems for recording any advice or information provided.

32. The prison is beginning to tackle the inadequate planning and recording of teaching and learning and the poor use of individual learning plans, identified at the previous inspection. Most learners now have an individual learning plan and many record the learning they carry out during each session. However, the identification and recording of learning goals is still weak on some programmes. Too few learning plans identify learners' long- or medium-term learning aims to help tutors plan an appropriate range of learning activities. Most learners attend literacy and numeracy sessions each week and are taught by at least two tutors. Although the individual learning plans and records of progress cover both subjects, the tutors do not co-ordinate the learning sufficiently for each learner. Most individual sessions are planned in isolation and do not build on the skills or contexts covered in the previous session. Few learners are shown how their development of literacy can support their learning in numeracy, or vice versa.

Leadership and management

33. The management of many aspects of the provision has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. The provision is promoted better, and there is better use of the induction programme and visits to the wings to recruit new learners. Staffing arrangements have improved significantly over the past five months, with the recruitment of five new members of staff. There are now effective arrangements, and no classes have been cancelled since October 2006. Communication among staff has improved recently, with good use of meetings to share ideas and consider ways to continue to improve the provision. Current topics under discussion include the use of individual learning plans, arrangements for reviewing learners' progress and the development of links between the education department and the risk-assessment management board. Much of this work also involves good sharing of practice with staff from other local prisons.

34. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners are treated fairly and with respect. Some tutors now promote inclusion well and adapt learning activities effectively to meet the needs of learners working at different levels in the same class. Some tutors use learning materials that promote diverse cultures, but equality and diversity are not promoted sufficiently throughout the curriculum area to broaden learners' understanding and challenge any stereotypical views or assumptions they may have.

35. Some staff have or are working towards appropriate qualifications in teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL. However, the prison has been slow to develop staff expertise in

providing specialist support. For example, too few literacy and numeracy staff have an adequate awareness of dyslexia and dyscalculia. Some staff are also required to support ESOL learners in literacy or numeracy sessions but they have not had adequate training in language awareness. Some managers carrying out observations of learning sessions and monitoring the quality of learning processes, such as initial assessments and learning plans, do not have sufficient expertise in teaching literacy, numeracy or ESOL. Staff do not receive sufficient feedback on the specialist technical aspects of their work relating to the development of learners' skills and standards of work. However, the self-assessment process is used well to evaluate the provision. Most staff are involved and adopt a self-critical approach. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the recent self-assessment report.

