

REINSPECTION REPORT

HMP Lowdham Grange Reinspection

31 January 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.

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 Lowdham Grange (the prison) is 11 miles northeast of Nottingham. The prison is a long-term, category B prison with the operational capacity to hold 540 convicted offenders, and it opened in 1998. It is a private contracted prison managed by Serco, and houses a range of category B adult male offenders from all over the country. Traditionally a working prison, HMP Lowdham Grange offers all offenders a range of employment and education opportunities, with activities available throughout the working week. Regimes include employment, religious events, the gymnasium and part-time education in a range of academic and practical subjects. These subjects include skills for life, literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages, information and communications technology (ICT), physical education (PE), art, and accredited alcohol and/or drugs awareness programmes. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. The education department also offers painting and decorating, and training leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in a training kitchen and an industrial production kitchen. The main prison facilities include two large, modern two-storey wings, an education block, vocational training areas, and industries, where offenders can earn a wage carrying out a variety of unskilled and semi-skilled work. There are also healthcare and medical services, a segregation unit, a visits hall, and a sports centre with indoor and outdoor facilities.

2. The education timetable is divided into morning, afternoon and evening sessions on weekdays. There are no education programmes at the weekend. The sessions reflect the prison's working day and the offenders have access to amenities and scheduled breaks in the mornings and afternoons. Offenders allocated to HMP Lowdham Grange are serving sentences of at least four years and usually have 12 months of their sentence left to serve.

3. Each offender is entitled to attend two education sessions a week, paid at their average employed pay rate. Some courses, such as painting and decorating, have more than two sessions, and some are supported by a homework system, whereby learners can carry out documented independent study in their cells.

GRADES

grade 1 = 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

Health, public services and care			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Cleaning</i>		3	
Other government-funded provision	8	3	

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Manufacturing technologies</i>		2	
Other government-funded provision	20	2	

Information and communications technology			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>ICT for users</i>		3	
Other government-funded provision	75	3	

Retail and commercial enterprise			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Hospitality and catering</i>		2	
Other government-funded provision	6	2	

Leisure, travel and tourism			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		4	
Other government-funded provision	22	4	

Preparation for life and work			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		3	
Other government-funded provision	116	3	

Grades awarded at reinspection

Leisure, travel and tourism		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		3
Other government-funded provision	28	3

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

4. This was a partial reinspection covering leisure, travel and tourism training, the only aspect of HMP Lowdham Grange's provision that was inadequate at the previous inspection. Two inspectors reinspected the physical education provision over one day in January 2007.

5. HMP Lowdham Grange was inspected in full in March 2006. The overall effectiveness of the provision was satisfactory. Leadership and management were satisfactory as were arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Training in retail and commercial enterprises, and engineering and manufacturing technologies was good. Training in health, public services and care, ICT and preparation for life and work was satisfactory. Training in leisure, travel and tourism, more specifically in the contributory area of sport, leisure and recreation, was inadequate. At reinspection, provision in leisure, travel and tourism was satisfactory.

6. HMP Lowdham Grange has made changes to its PE provision. Some staff have achieved an introductory teaching qualification, and key skills in literacy and numeracy have been introduced into the curriculum. HMP Lowdham Grange's overall effectiveness remains satisfactory.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	2
Number of learners interviewed	20
Number of staff interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of visits	1

AREAS OF LEARNING

Leisure, travel and tourism

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		3
Other government-funded provision	28	3

7. The prison offers courses leading to three sports leaders' awards, NVQs at level 1, and six practical coaching awards. It also offers modules in sport for older people, emergency first aid, healthy living and get fit for life. Up to 12 learners can attend each course. Courses run according to need and are spread over the week. The recreational programme operates from 0830 to 2030, seven days each week. A PE manager is supported by five full-time PE officers, and three gym orderlies and learning support assistants. There is a four-court sports hall, and separate cardiovascular and weight-training rooms. Major building works are providing a new classroom and more space for weight training rooms, and will be completed within the next few months. The team has access to a small dedicated classroom that has some ICT equipment. A full-size football pitch is currently being refurbished with artificial turf and will be ready in May 2007. Approximately 230 to 250 offenders use the gym facilities each month, which is 50 per cent of the prison's population.

Sport, leisure and recreation

Strengths

- good promotion of a wide range of practical courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient capacity to develop qualified teaching staff to meet the needs of learners

Achievement and standards

8. Overall retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. Some very short courses, such as emergency aid, get fit for life and some level 1 coaching courses, last between half a day and four days. Retention and achievement rates on these are very high with almost all learners successfully completing the award. The retention rate on sports leadership courses has been 75 per cent over the past two years, and most learners who stay to the end of the course achieve the qualification. Learners particularly enjoy participating in the courses, and their confidence, subject knowledge, personal organisation and team working skills all show significant improvements.

The quality of provision

9. Learners participate in a good range of practical coaching awards that are well promoted in the prison. This was highlighted as strength by the previous inspection and has been maintained. A wide variety of courses, mainly at level 1, give a good introduction to sports coaching, fitness training and healthy living, as well as re-engaging learners in education and training. The prison publicises its vocational training programme

through leaflet drops on the accommodation wings, displays on notice boards and effective use of the in-house television advertising. Good use is made of quarterly learner forums to discuss learners' views and explain the forthcoming programme of activities. The courses generate significant interest and commitment from the learners and they participate with much enthusiasm.

10. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection, and are now satisfactory. Lessons are generally well planned and prepared, and the learning environment is managed effectively. Although learning activities are usually progressive, group teaching does not always fully engage all the learners. Tutors place insufficient emphasis upon checking and reinforcing learners' knowledge and understanding. Teaching methods and styles, although better than at the previous inspection, are still not fully capturing the interest of all learners. Learners with greater levels of experience and knowledge often take responsibility for helping less experienced learners with their work. This practice works effectively and allows all learners to develop their skills and confidence.

11. The accommodation, facilities and equipment used for background knowledge and practical work are satisfactory and will be significantly enhanced when the building programme is completed in the summer of 2007. Assessment practice is generally effective and learners' work is checked and marked within appropriate timescales. Through good links with a local college, staff bring students with learning difficulties into the prison to be coached by learners as part of their courses. This arrangement is successful and well established.

12. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress is satisfactory. Although formal reviews do not always take place, staff discuss with individual learners the progress that they are making and ensure that they are completing the work they need to do to achieve the qualification. Learners who are not up to date with their studies receive good support from staff to complete the required work before the end of the course.

13. Support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory. All learners receive an initial assessment. Where a learning need is identified and support is requested by the learner, appropriate help is usually provided. Staff support learners effectively throughout their courses. Working relationships between learners and staff are respectful and professional. Good work takes place to help learners understand the health benefits of exercise. Many learners take good advantage of additional classes that help them become more aware of how to improve their physical health and develop a more positive outlook and attitude.

Leadership and management

14. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection to improve the quality of provision and learners' experience. Staff work well as a team and receive an effective annual appraisal of their individual performance. Where a development need is identified, staff are supported to attend either in-house or external training. However, the previous inspection weakness that staff have not achieved qualified teacher status is still an area for further development. Operational demands mean that only one member of staff can be released at a time to attend teacher-training courses. Few staff currently have a qualification and the experience to enable them to be particularly effective in their teaching.

15. The accommodation for practical and background knowledge work is managed effectively to maximise its use during the construction of new facilities. Data for the courses is collected, although there is currently little analysis of retention and achievement data to highlight possible areas for improvement. There is satisfactory management of the skills for life support for learners with an identified support need, and they are usually helped by a suitably competent member of staff. Self-assessment indicates a good insight by staff into the quality of provision. The most recent self-assessment report made many **of the same judgements as the inspectors. A lesson observation programme has been** implemented, and feedback is given to staff on their performance. Feedback from learners is collected in the form of questionnaires and quarterly forums, but there is little analysis of this information. There is a positive approach to the promotion of equality and opportunity, and learners and staff work in an environment of dignity and respect.

