

HMP Elmley Reinspection

Adult Learning Inspectorate Inspection Report 4 December 2006

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for achievement and standards and the quality of provision and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

Outstanding provision should typically have leadership and management and at least two of the three strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision judged to be a grade 1. All strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision will be graded 1 or 2.

Good provision should have leadership and management and at least two of the three strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision judged to be a grade 2 or better. All strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision will be grade 3 or better.

Satisfactory provision should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and at least two of the strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades for the strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision, with no more than one graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where two or more of strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

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

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

Description of the provider

1. HMP Elmley is a male category B local prison with an average roll of 985 offenders and is one of the Sheppey cluster of prisons. The cluster is managed by a chief executive and has a central interventions team. HMP Elmley is a purpose built local prison serving all courts in the county of Kent and providing overflow accommodation for London. It opened in 1992 and includes a category C unit for 240 built in 1997 and a vulnerable prisoner unit. At the time of the reinspection there were 985 offenders. Of these, 23% were on remand, 185 in the vulnerable prisoner unit and 19% were foreign nationals.
2. Employment is offered in workshops, including a Prisons ICT Academy (PICTA) workshop and an induction workshop where offenders receive training in manual handling, basic first aid, catering, laundry, horticulture, waste management, industrial cleaning or domestic duties. A4e has held the contract for delivery of education, as part of an Offender Learning & Skills Service (OLASS) partnership agreement with the Learning and Skills Council and the Prison Service, since July 2006.
3. Classrooms operate on all the house blocks where skills for life, social and life skills, and IT related courses are provided for offenders. A4e provide an information, advice and guidance (IAG) and induction service, including initial assessment. A **learnirect** suite offers online skills for life courses and IAG. A purpose built gym and all-weather pitch provides recreational and vocational sports facilities. The education contract is managed by a cluster education manager, a deputy education manager and 32 staff of whom eight are full time.
4. The physical education (PE) department operates as the Island Sports College and offers vocational qualifications with mapped progression routes and embedded key and wider key skills, as well as recreational PE. A small classroom area with a limited number of computers is used for small groups of learners.

Overall effectiveness

Reinspection Grade 3

5. At the previous inspection achievement and standards and the quality of provision were satisfactory. Literacy, numeracy and language support and personal and social development, along with the arrangements for equality of opportunity were also satisfactory. Employability and vocational training and leadership and management of learning and skills were inadequate. At the reinspection, the overall effectiveness of the provision is adequate. Achievement and standards of the quality of provision overall are good, as are employability and vocational training and literacy, and numeracy and language support. Leadership and management, personal and social development and the arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory.
6. The inspection team had some reliability in the self-assessment process. All staff involved with learning and skills contributed to the self-assessment report. The education provider and physical education team also produced additional detailed self-assessment reports. A range of processes were used to identify strengths and weaknesses but data was not used effectively to support many of the judgements. The report is insufficiently evaluative. The grades in the self-assessment report were the same as those identified by inspectors.

7. The prison has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to improve. A detailed action plan to address the weaknesses has been compiled but progress in addressing some aspects has been slow. A quality improvement plan has been implemented but this has not yet fully impacted on the quality of provision. The quality improvement group is not effective in identifying aspects of good provision and sharing it across the prison. Most of the key challenges from the previous inspection have been addressed but not all actions fully completed.

Grades

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Achievement and standards and the quality of provision		3
Contributory grades:		
Employability and vocational training		4
Literacy, numeracy and language support		3
Personal and social development		3

Leadership and management		4
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3

Grades awarded at reinspection

Achievement and standards and the quality of provision		2
Contributory grades:		
Employability and vocational training		2
Literacy, numeracy and language support		2
Personal and social development		3

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3

About the reinspection

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	10
Number of learners interviewed	31
Number of staff interviewed	38
Number of employers interviewed	
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of visits to the provider	2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this reinspection:

Achievement and standards and the quality of provision

Employability and vocational training

Strengths

- High pass rates on accredited programs.
- Good development of practical skills by some learners.
- Good range of provision in physical education.
- Good additional learning support.

Weaknesses

- Insufficient provision in some workshops to improve vocational skills.
- Insufficient recording of soft skills in some workshops.

Literacy, numeracy and language support

Strengths

- High pass rates in literacy and numeracy and language.
- Outstanding progress made by learners in most learning sessions.
- Highly effective initial assessment and induction to education.
- Good attention to individual needs of learners.

Weaknesses

- Insufficient support for learners with dyslexia.
- Insufficient accommodation for outreach work on residential wings.
- Some inappropriate target setting in individual learning plans.

Personal and social development

Strengths

- Good opportunities for distance learning.
- Good development of personal and social skills.

Weaknesses

- Inadequate access to, and use of, the library.
- Insufficient provision for study for distance learning and Open University.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- Good collaborative working to improve the planning of learning and skills.
- Good recognition across the prison of equality and diversity.

Weaknesses

- Slow implementation of improvements to provision.
- Inadequate use and analysis of data to improve the quality of learning and skills.

Main findings

Grade 2

Achievement and standards

Employability and vocational training

8. Vocational qualification pass rates are high. In PE, pass rates for those undertaking sports leaders awards and manual handling courses are 100%. Most learners in this area also complete key skills in communications at level 1. Other short qualifications such as food hygiene also have 100% achievements. In the gardens, over 100 learners have been awarded valuable unit qualifications at level 1 in horticulture skills, whilst those who stay long enough progress to level 2.
9. Standards of work produced across the areas where there is accredited vocational training are good. In ICT, students show a good understanding of using spreadsheets and the use of graphs. The standard of work in the gardens is good and learners are able to demonstrate good planting skills and a clear understanding of plants. Good practical skills are developed in the laundry and in waste management and learners across all areas make steady progress. A good standard of work and good progress continues to be made by learners in the PICTA workshop. Offenders working in the kitchen learn basic craft skills although work is not accredited as those working here do not generally stay for long periods of time.
10. Punctuality in the workshops and for PE sessions has improved since the previous inspection and although on some occasions there is slow movement between wings and training locations, this is now satisfactory. Attendance in workshops and on vocational training courses is mostly good.

Literacy, numeracy and language support

11. Pass rates on literacy, numeracy and language courses are high. The prison has been successful in maintaining the high pass rates identified at the previous inspection. Most learners who complete their courses are successful. For example, on entry level numeracy courses, over 95% of learners who completed their course achieved part or a full qualification. On level 1 and level 2 courses in numeracy, pass rates are 100%. Pass rates are at a similarly high level on literacy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses.
12. Learners make outstanding progress in most learning sessions. They work diligently and with great enthusiasm for learning. They are justifiably proud of their achievements and many learners speak about their work confidently and articulately.

Personal and social development

13. Pass rates across the provision for personal and social development are broadly satisfactory. Achievement of a range of qualifications by those who complete distance learning and Open University (OU) courses are good although few qualifications were gained by students in art during the first half of 2007 due to staffing problems.
14. There continues to be good development of personal and social skills by offenders through a good range of accredited and non-accredited activities. In learning sessions learners demonstrate good communication skills and support each other well. Standards of work by some learners on OU and distance learning courses are exceptionally good. In art, learners show satisfactory skills in linear drawing and have a clear knowledge of the use of colours and textures. Art projects contain an element of research and free writing about the styles and characteristics of the work of relevant artists. As a result, learners in art make good progress both in their practical skills and in their literacy and research skills.

*Teaching, training and learning**Employability and vocational training*

15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory or better. Teaching staff and instructors are generally well qualified and experienced. Planning for individual learning has improved and is now satisfactory. Teaching and learning is good in PICTA, ICT and PE. Individual coaching is good and effective use is made of resources. Good quality learning materials and books are made available to students. Classrooms in some areas are poor. The theory room in the gym is dark and noisy whilst the ICT classroom on house block 2 is cramped and there are no shower facilities in the laundry for learners.
16. The range of provision in PE is good. Resources and facilities for PE are adequate and include a well maintained outside AstroTurf area. Staff are well qualified and keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date. Some courses are run with both prison staff and offenders attending and this helps to develop mutual respect. Learners' progress is thoroughly recorded and there is good use made of a well produced record and assessment booklet. A good range of competitions are arranged by PE staff to help motivate learners.
17. Assessments are well organised and clear records are kept. Individual learning plans (ILPs) are satisfactory, although some lack clear short term targets. Although the prison has introduced the recognition of soft skills development in the workshops, the recording of these skills is varied. ILPs completed by the PE department are detailed and thorough.

Literacy, numeracy and language support

18. The induction process and initial assessment are highly effective. The procedure begins soon after arrival with a simple but very effective initial assessment of learners' abilities in literacy and numeracy. Information received from other institutions about learners' previous achievements is used well to avoid duplicating the initial assessment procedures and to place offenders on appropriate courses. A more detailed assessment is carried out to allocate learners onto courses at an appropriate level. The induction to education also provides some taster activities that serve as a good introduction to future learning. The time lag between offenders completing their induction and beginning their courses is excessive, with some learners experiencing loss of motivation. Learners are also screened for specific learning difficulties. Results from these assessments indicate that a large proportion of offenders have dyslexia. The support available for these learners, though increased since the previous inspection, is still insufficient for the numbers requiring it.
19. Teaching and learning are generally good. In most learning sessions learners' abilities and previous experiences vary greatly. Tutors plan well for this. Tasks and activities have a clear focus on meeting learners' individual needs. Most learning sessions have a clear sense of purpose; good pace and most learners make excellent progress. Learners complete their learning diaries, which is a record of the tasks they have completed, at the end of each lesson. All offenders have an ILP which records details about the courses and levels they are studying. The targets contained in these ILPs are too vague making it difficult to measure and record progress against them.

Personal and social development

20. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with learning sessions adequately planned. Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable. Learners are generally polite and most are enthusiastic to learn, as recognised at the previous inspection. Learning sessions are well planned and good account is taken of individual learners' needs. In most learning sessions learning is now checked sufficiently, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Some classrooms are cramped, particularly the classroom used for art on house block 5, which is poor and learners have no access to water. The prison has plans to move this provision.
21. Access to the library for most learners is inadequate. The library facility is good and there is ample space to sit and study. However, most learners are unable to gain weekly access due to staff shortages on the wings and those on OU or distance learning courses have difficulty getting additional materials for study.
22. Insufficient provision is provided for learners on OU and distance learning courses. Many are finding studying difficult, especially when there are three in a cell. No space is provided to allow for independent study. Most of these learners have insufficient access to ICT and have to complete assignments by hand.

*Range of provision**Employability and vocational training*

23. The range of qualifications in PE has been improved and is now good. Courses include the Focus gym instructor award and level 1 football coaching through the support of Charlton Athletic Football Club. The range of courses in the PICTA workshops remains satisfactory. The prison laundry continues to offer the level 2 laundry qualification to vulnerable offenders and part-time work in the workshops also continues to be offered.
24. The range of opportunities for the development of good vocational skills in some workshops continues to be insufficient. Although there have been slight improvements made since the previous inspection the prison still offers a large proportion of low skill work in many production workshops.

Literacy, numeracy and language support

25. The range of provision is good. The range of courses available at appropriate levels enables offenders to improve their skills in literacy and numeracy. Offenders whose first language is not English access courses at two levels. Over 100 offenders each year produce CDs to send home to their families through the 'Storybook Dads' provision. This initiative enables offenders to improve their reading and speaking skills and they participate with confidence and great enthusiasm. Around 40 offenders per month enrol on literacy and numeracy courses that are delivered as 'outreach' on the residential house blocks. Learners who are not yet ready to attend formal classes appreciate the support they receive through this provision. However, there is no suitable accommodation allocated to it and learning sessions take place in wholly unsuitable venues.

Personal and social development

26. The prison continues to offer a satisfactory range of opportunities to acquire personal and social skills. Opportunities for offenders wishing to complete OU or distance learning courses are good. There are currently over 20 learners on a range of these courses and they receive appropriate help with funding. The provision for 'Storybook Dads', which provides excellent support to help offenders develop their confidence to be able to read to their children, is good. The social and life skills programme supports the development of literacy and numeracy for offenders who have higher level skills in these areas.

Guidance and support

Employability and vocational training

27. Support for learners with additional learning needs is good. Those identified at initial assessment as having low literacy and numeracy are given good, regular support in the workshops, gym and other vocational areas by highly experienced staff. The support tutor has an office in the gym and has a particularly high profile. Peer support workers are used well in ICT, PICTA and PE. This is well received by learners. Induction into work areas is mostly thorough and well recorded and the emphasis on health and safety is good.

Literacy, numeracy and language support

28. Guidance and support within literacy, numeracy and language are good. In learning sessions teachers support learners well through targeted questioning and, in most cases, provide prompt and detailed feedback on learners' work. Peer tutors play an important role in most learning sessions. Under the direction of the tutor, peer tutors provide encouragement and support when learners lack confidence in their ability to complete a task successfully. Learning sessions are planned well, however some learners find the 2.5 hour sessions too long.

Personal and social development

29. Peer support tutors are used well across some parts of the provision. They are given good training to ensure they can give appropriate support to other learners. Learners receive good support for literacy and numeracy when needed although there is insufficient support for those identified with dyslexia. The 'Toe by Toe' peer support scheme continues to be used successfully on the house blocks.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

Strengths

- Good collaborative working to improve the planning of learning and skills
- Good recognition across the prison of equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- Slow implementation of improvements to provision
- Inadequate use and analysis of data to improve the quality of learning and skills

30. Leadership and management are now satisfactory. Collaborative working across the prison to improve the planning of learning and skills, identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, is good. Restructuring of the management team within the cluster has given clearly identified responsibilities to interventions and resettlement pathways. Prison management and A4e have worked effectively to implement a part-time education timetable and allocation to industries to enable an increase in the number of opportunities to participate in work or education. Increase in outreach provision on residential wings is also beginning to reach those learners who are reluctant to participate. Learners are appreciative of the increased opportunity to participate in an activity. The prison and A4e IAG staff are beginning to work effectively to ensure that appropriate information is given to learners on arrival at the prison and also opportunities for continuity on release. The information given is totally relevant and appropriate to individual learner needs. Poor punctuality, a weakness identified at the previous inspection, has been addressed by improved liaison and discussion and is now satisfactory.

31. Processes for quality improvement are now satisfactory. A quality calendar and manual have been produced. Some observation of teaching and learning, the use of prisoner feedback and work evaluation has recently been implemented to gather information about the quality of the provision. Many of these activities are very recent and have yet to make a significant impact. The quality improvement group has a more strategic focus. There is a lack of recognition of good practice within the prison and sharing this with other staff. Progress to implement the post inspection action plan and to address weaknesses has only taken place within the last four to five months prior to reinspection. Improvements are taking place in most areas but the progress has been slow.

32. The use and analysis of data to improve the quality of learning and skills remains inadequate. A wealth of data is being collected but analysis of this data is not used effectively. The self-assessment report lacked any substantial quantitative judgments. The prison does not sufficiently analyse data to clearly identify successful training programmes. Data are provided for the number of learners that have achieved an accreditation. Data is not used to reflect the different types of offenders and trends across the prison as a whole. The use of data in the PE department is good.
33. Although observation of teaching and learning is recorded it is not analysed to ascertain the quality of teaching.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

34. The recognition of respect between offenders and education and training staff across the prison is good. The prison has established a working group to develop an understanding of the wider issues, other than racism and bullying, within the prison. A database identifying offenders that can provide language interpretation and support now has 37 different languages available. Staff training has been provided by A4e to increase knowledge and understanding. Tutors are clearly applying different learning methods to ensure individual learning and progress. The prison is also implementing a programme of equality and diversity learning through the use of information technology. A restructuring of pay to ensure improved equality is being implemented in the next few months. The complaints procedure is thorough and there have been no racism and bullying complaints about teaching and training staff. Some prison staff do not encourage learning and the work ethic with the inmates and do not provide suitable opportunities for learning on the residential wings.