

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: HMP Lewes
Date of visit: 21 May 2008

Context

This monitoring visit follows the inspection in August 2007 at which inspectors judged the prison's learning and skills provision to be inadequate in its overall effectiveness and leadership and management. The prison's capacity to improve was graded satisfactory, as were achievements and standards, the quality of provision and equality of opportunity.

Built in 1853, HMP Lewes is a category B local prison, based on the outskirts of Lewes, East Sussex. The prison has an operational capacity of 732 offenders, comprising remand, un-sentenced and short sentenced adults, young offenders on remand and adults serving a life or indeterminate sentence. In May 2008, the prison's population was 630, of whom 596 were adults and 34 were young offenders. Approximately 25% of offenders were on remand and 14% were foreign nationals. The prison has a bifurcated prisoner population with an average length of stay of approximately six weeks. Overall, a large proportion of those stay less than one month. Offenders on longer or indeterminate sentences maybe in the prison for two to three years .Five percent of remand prisoners are held for in excess of nine months awaiting their trials. The main education provider is Sussex Downs College (the college) which is contracted by North East Surrey College of Technology.

Achievement and standards

The inspection report identifies low achievement of individual learning goals. What has been done to increase this and how effective has this been?	Reasonable progress
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The prison and the college have introduced and implemented good systems for recording and monitoring learners' achievement. Each course run by the education department is divided into smaller components. Staff now identify and record learners' achievement of short term goals and their partial achievement of qualifications. Similarly, most learners on vocational training now work towards units of nationally recognised vocational qualifications. Staff keep good records of learners' progress and since March 2008 approximately 66% of learners have left with some form of accreditation or permanent record of their learning. The prison and college

are also developing management systems well to record and measure learners' incremental achievement of their learning goals. More accurate and meaningful data now focuses on monitoring the progress of each individual, minimising double-counting if learners achieve more than one unit or attend more than one course. However, it was too early judge trends in achievement during this monitoring visit.

Quality of provision

How effective have the actions been to improve the quality of the provision in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)?	Reasonable progress
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The college has made significant progress in developing the discrete literacy and numeracy courses that take place in the education department. The accommodation is smarter and provides a more conducive learning environment. Tutors use a wider range of teaching methods and learners participate well in learning activities based on interesting contexts. Tutors now identify appropriate learning targets effectively and use individual learning plans well to plan learning and assess learners' incremental progress towards their goals. Learners understand their learning targets well and receive constructive feedback on their progress.

The management of learning on the outreach literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision to learners in the accommodation wings has improved. Appointment systems are more effective and learners now have a clear understanding of the specific learning targets for each session. The prison and the college have identified the need to increase the outreach provision further to meet the needs of literacy and numeracy needs of learners at work and on vocational training.

The ESOL provision remains an area for improvement. Staff have received external training and support and have increased the range of learning activities to develop learners' listening and speaking skills in more relevant contexts. Although marketing of this provision has improved, take-up of the provision fluctuates significantly. Prison and college managers have not effectively evaluated the ESOL provision since the recent developments, to identify how well it now meets the needs of the prisoners who speak English as an additional language.

What progress has the prison made in increasing the range of provision for short-stay offenders and young offenders?	Significant progress
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The prison has worked well with its partners to make significant improvements to the range of its learning and skills provision. The college has restructured its courses into six-week modules and the prison has doubled the number of its short vocational courses. The longer vocational programmes are effectively linked to the achievement

of individual units of external qualifications. Short-stay offenders now have a wider choice of relevant courses that they can complete while at the prison and that provide a useful foundation for further learning or employment. The prison has also effectively reviewed the range of courses specifically for young offenders. These now include courses in physical education and sport, and short courses arranged through external partners, such as the fire service.

Leadership and management

How effective are the proposed actions to improve the strategic and operational planning?	Reasonable progress
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The prisons has recently developed its overarching three-year strategy, *Towards Excellence*, which incorporates clear and relevant objectives in a specific plan for learning and skills. The prison is making good use of a comprehensive needs analysis to develop a revised reducing re-offending strategy linked to each of the seven pathways, including employment, training and education. Many aspects of operational planning and management have improved. The college has extended its induction programme and provision of information, advice and guidance and sentence plans are used more effectively when identifying learners' individual learning and skills targets. The prison is reviewing the pay policy for offenders and it is restructuring the allocation of work activities to increase participation, albeit on a part-time basis. The prison is currently developing its guidance and training for learning and skills staff working with young offenders and vulnerable adults.

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has the prison made in developing its arrangements to monitor and improve the provision?	Reasonable progress
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Quality improvement arrangements have improved. In education, managers are successfully adapting many of the quality assurance systems developed in the college to build on the previous practices to improve offender learning and skills. These include observation of teaching and learning that are more focused on learners' development and improved collection and analysis of data. Similarly, the prison has increased the range of quality improvement activities, with more effective monitoring of the quality of learning and better use of data to evaluate learning and skills. However, there is currently insufficient sharing of good practice in the implementation of many of the quality improvement arrangements across the prison.

Managers are using self-assessment well to monitor and develop most aspects of learning and skills. The self-assessment report now includes comprehensive monitoring against each question in the *Common Inspection Framework* for each

strand of the provision. The post-inspection action plan is also used well to identify and monitor areas for improvement, although it fails to check that the prison is maintaining the identified strengths.