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HMP WINCHESTER – COMMENDABLE PROGRESS, BUT SCOPE FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

Winchester was performing reasonably well and had made progress, though there remained plenty still to do, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced inspection of the local prison.

HMP Winchester's last inspection found the prison performing reasonably well, although suffering all the typical pressures of a crowded Victorian local prison with a transient and needy population.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- Winchester remained a reasonably safe prison with good security, a relatively low use of force and reasonable suicide prevention arrangements;
- managers had focused on some outdated staff attitudes and poor staff-prisoner relationships and some improvements were visible;
- the quality of education had improved, as had healthcare provision;
- there was full employment in West Hill, the resettlement unit, and
- reintegration services were satisfactory, and a wide range of basic services were available to help prisoners resettle into the community.

Inspectors also noted, however, that:

- measures to reduce violence and bullying were inadequate and required improvement;
- not all staff engaged positively with prisoners;
- time out of cell remained variable, with as little as two hours per day for some unemployed prisoners;
- over a quarter of prisoners on the main site were without any purposeful work or training activity; and
- resettlement needed to be better managed.

Nick Hardwick said:

“Winchester is a crowded, Victorian local prison with all the challenges of a transient and needy population. Nevertheless, in most areas it continues to perform reasonably well. There has been some commendable progress in a number of areas since our last inspection, but there remains much scope for further improvement.

Michael Spurr, Chief Executive Officer of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), said:

"The Chief Inspector acknowledges the progress Winchester has made since its previous reasonably positive inspection. The quality of education, employment and healthcare provision have all improved whilst the prison remains a safe environment with a low use of force.

"The Governor and his staff will continue to work to improve staff attitudes and staff-prisoner relationships - both important factors in tackling prisoners' offending behaviour."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 25 February 2011 at www.justice.gov.uk/inspectors/hmi-prisons
2. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is an independent inspectorate, inspecting places of detention to report on conditions and treatment, and promote positive outcomes for those detained and the public.
3. This unannounced short follow-up inspection was carried out from 13-16 September 2010.
4. HMP Winchester is a category B male local prison holding adult remand and convicted prisoners, serving the courts in Hampshire, with a category C resettlement unit at West Hill.
5. Please contact Jane Parsons in HMI Prisons Press Office on 0207 035 2123 or 07880 787452 from 0915 to 1415 Monday to Friday if you would like more information or to request an interview with Nick Hardwick.