



JULY 2008

020 7210 8722

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 00:01, 30 JULY 2008

HMP BULLINGDON: PERFORMING WELL DESPITE CHALLENGES

HMP Bullingdon had risen to many of the challenges of its diverse role but still has more work to do, said Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of a full announced inspection of the Oxfordshire prison.

Bullingdon operates as both a local and training prison, accommodating a challenging mix of convicted and un-convicted prisoners, together with longer-term prisoners, including those needing to address substance abuse problems or sexual offending. It has also undergone considerable organisational change in recent years, yet was performing reasonably well against all the tests of a healthy prison.

Inspectors found:

- Overall, Bullingdon remained a reasonably safe prison with little self-harming, a satisfactory segregation unit and good support for substance abusers.
- However, some safety issues still needed improvement: first night and induction arrangements were too informal; responses to bullying were not sufficiently robust; levels of use of force remained high; and a body belt had been used 3 times in 2007, apparently as a response to threatened self-harm – which is almost always inappropriate.
- Staff-prisoner relationships varied across the prison, and not all diversity issues were adequately addressed.
- Most accommodation at Bullingdon was of a reasonable physical standard, but shared cells were cramped and had inadequately screened toilets.
- Healthcare was generally sound, but had outgrown its accommodation.
- Most prisoners were able to take part in some purposeful activity, although the quantity of education, work and training was insufficient to ensure all prisoners were purposefully occupied for most of the day.
- Resettlement was generally well managed and reintegration services were reasonable. Drug services were particularly good.

Anne Owers said:

“Bullington was designed as a community prison combining a number of roles and has also had to undergo various organisational reforms in recent years.

“It is, therefore, to the prison’s credit that it has risen to many of the challenges posed by the complex and diverse demands placed on it.

“Inevitably, there is plenty more still to do, but this should not obscure the progress made, or that this progress has been sustained at a time of considerable pressure.”

Phil Wheatley, Director General of the National Offender Management Service, said:

“This is a good report, of which the Governor and staff should be rightly proud. Progress has continued since the inspection, with 45 more full time work places and 40 part time education spaces. Eight additional classrooms and three new workshops will open in September. There is now a violence reduction coordinator post, a foreign national coordinator and an experienced Racial Equality Officer. Use of Force at the prison is falling year on year, as the report identifies.

“Earlier this month, Prisons Minister David Hanson MP officially opened Bullington’s new Finmere unit, increasing capacity by 120 places. The unit will allow the prison to make further advances, particularly in improving first night and induction arrangements.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. A full copy of the HMCIP report into HMP Bullington is available from <http://inspectors.justice.gov.uk/hmprisons/>
2. HMP Bullington is a local and category C training prison for convicted and unconvicted adult male prisoners.
3. At the time of the inspection it had an operational capacity of 963.
4. The announced inspection took place on 14-18 January 2008.
5. Anne Owers is available for media interviews. Please call 0207 210 8722 to arrange an interview.