

**HMP Birmingham has consistently improved over recent years and is well placed to continue to do so, according to the latest report on the prison from HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Anne Owers.**

Despite population pressure, and an increase in capacity from 930 to 1400, the inspectors found that the prison had made good progress since the previous inspection and that positive attitudes and a focus on rehabilitation were firmly embedded

Anne Owers said:

"We found improvements in all our four key areas - safety, respect, purposeful activity and resettlement - and many systems that had been new, or were planned, at the time of the last inspection had been put in place. Much more purposeful activity was available and the building blocks for effective resettlement work were in place. Perhaps most importantly, and in stark contrast to its previous history, the majority of staff displayed enthusiasm, commitment and understanding of the prison's direction and prisoners reported staff to be friendly and helpful."

Against a backdrop of an overcrowded prison with two prisoners sharing cells meant for one, unplanned and inappropriate prisoner movements and too little purposeful work to occupy all the population, inspectors found some areas that need further development:

- Personal officers and a voluntary drug treatment unit are needed to underpin resettlement work;
- Detoxification facilities were insufficient to cope with need;
- Work with foreign national prisoners was underdeveloped;
- Allocation to work was inefficient and required better management.

In conclusion Anne Owers said:

"Birmingham is an example of what can be done by a committed and determined Governor, who stays in post, with the support of effective senior managers. But it is also a tribute to the whole of the staff team, who have shown themselves able to change and respond to positive leadership and a clear new vision for the prison.

"The task now is to continue the progress that has been made. This inspection shows Birmingham, now the second-largest prison in

England and Wales, is well placed to continue to improve."

Phil Wheatley, Director General of the Prison Service, said:

"This is an extremely encouraging report and I am very pleased that the Chief Inspector has recognised the extent of the transformation at HMP Birmingham. Local prisons continue to operate under considerable population pressures, and taking the significant increase in capacity into consideration as well, this represents a tremendous achievement by the governor and staff.

"I am confident that their enthusiasm and dedication will continue to take the prison forward. Further improvements have already taken place including the implementation of induction programmes, an anti-bullying policy and alcohol strategy, whilst a foreign national prisoner group will be in place by the end of the year."

**Notes to editors:**

1. The last [short follow-up inspection of HMP Birmingham](#) was held on 11-13 May 2004.
2. HMP Birmingham is an adult male category B local prison. The last [full inspection](#) was held in October 2002.
3. All inspectorate reports and releases are available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/prisons/inspprisons>.
4. For an electronic copy of the reports, please email [allan.ross@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:allan.ross@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) or call 020 7273 3343.