



20 January 2009

020 3334 3547

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 00.01, 20 JANUARY 2009**

**HMP THORN CROSS – GOOD WORK SUSTAINED BUT RESETTLEMENT  
NEEDS STRENGTHENING**

HMP Thorn Cross had continued its very good work in most areas, following its change of role, but its crucial resettlement work needed to be refocused and strengthened, said Anne Owers, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of the inspection of the open prison near Warrington.

Thorn Cross used to hold juveniles (15-18) and young adults (18-21). It now holds young adults and 21-25 year olds.

Inspectors found that

- The prison remained safe and had taken action to reduce the number of absconds, though its strategies needed amendment for its changed population
- The physical environment, and relationships between staff and prisoners were good, particularly in the high intensity training centre, but aspects of race relations needed strengthening
- There had been some improvements in the delivery of education and training, but it was disappointing that only 13 young prisoners worked outside the establishment, and the balance of activities did not meet demand
- Resettlement needed refocusing: the offender management model was not working well, there was no management of short-sentenced prisoners, and too little family support work. The high intensity unit provided an excellent model, but only for a minority of young men.

Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons said:

“Overall, Thorn Cross remains a high-performing young offender institution. However, it is now dealing with a more varied population, without the dedicated resources previously provided for juveniles.

“It will need to ensure that it strengthens its resettlement work, to provide the best possible support for an age group that has a very high risk of re-offending.”

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

“I am pleased that the Chief Inspector recognises the excellent work being done by management and staff at Thorn Cross to create a safe and constructive environment for the young people in custody.

I am confident the Governor and staff will continue to work together to strengthen resettlement work”

#### **Notes for Editors**

1. A copy of the full report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 20 January 2009 at <http://inspectors.justice.gov.uk/hmiprison>.
2. The announced inspection of HMP Thorn Cross was carried out from 28-30 July 2008.
3. The operational capacity at HMP Thorn Cross at the time of the inspection was 225.
4. The last inspection of HMP Thorn Cross took place from April 2005.
5. Thorn Cross is an open young offender institution. Until recently, it held young adults and juveniles but, following the Youth Justice Board's decision to withdraw funding, it now holds a mixture of young adults (18-21) and adult prisoners aged 21 to 25.
6. Anne Owers, Chief Inspector, is available for interview. If you would like to speak to her please contact Nicole Valentinuzzi in the Press Office on 0203 334 3547.