

# The College of North West London

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 130429

**Name of lead inspector:** Richard Beaumont HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 1 April 2011

**Type of provider:** General further education college

**Address:** Dudden Hill Lane  
London  
NW10 2XD

**Telephone number:** 0208 2085000

## Information about the provider

1. The College of North West London is a large general further education college situated in the London Borough of Brent. The college has main centres at Willesden and Wembley and provides programmes in most subject areas other than land based. The areas of learning with the largest numbers of students are preparation for life and work and construction and engineering. The college provides courses from entry level to level 6. Collaboration with the Islamic College of Advanced Studies (ICAS) gives the college opportunities to offer GCE A levels. The college offers a range of work-based learning provision and higher education programmes in early childhood, construction, engineering, science and ICT. All local secondary schools have a sixth form.
2. During 2009/2010, some 12,295 students were enrolled. Of these, 80% were aged over 19 years and 23% of all students were on full-time day courses and 14% were evening-only enrolments. Some 39% of all learners were female and 74% were of known minority ethnic heritage, including 16% of students who were White but of non-British origin.
3. In 2009, the population of Brent was 263,464, of whom 49% were male and 55% were from minority ethnic groups. The largest ethnic group after White British was Asian or Asian British and Indian. Brent has a relatively young population, with 25% being under 20 years of age and 37% in the 20 to 39 age range. Some 85% of Brent's economic activity is in the service sector, of which around one third is in distribution, hotels and restaurants. The remainder is in manufacturing and construction. Unemployment in Brent was 5%, and 35% of the population in the borough were economically inactive. Thirty per cent of the population have a level 4 and/or level 5 qualification, compared to an average of 20% for London.
4. The college's mission is 'to lead in the provision of knowledge and skills for work, in support of London's economic success'.
5. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Middlesex University.
6. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the college:
  - The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance
  - Skills Team Ltd.

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10</b>
<p><b>Provision for young learners:</b> 14 to16</p> <p>Further education (16 to18)</p> <p>Foundation learning</p>	<p>223 part-time learners 92 full-time learners</p> <p>356 part-time learners 1,278 full-time learners</p> <p>114 part-time learners 681 full-time learners</p>
<p><b>Provision for adult learners:</b> Further education (19+)</p>	<p>1,311 full-time learners 4,516 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Employer provision:</b> Train to Gain Apprenticeships</p>	<p>1,157 learners 290 apprentices</p>

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
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	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Science and mathematics	2
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	3
Construction, planning and the built environment	3
Information and communication technology (ICT)	1
Literacy and numeracy	3
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	2

## Overall effectiveness

7. This is a satisfactory college with satisfactory capacity to improve. Outcomes for students are satisfactory overall and are outstanding in ICT and good in Train to Gain, science and mathematics, and ESOL. Students feel safe at college. Attendance is satisfactory and gradually improving.
8. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In most lessons students work diligently to develop appropriate knowledge and skills, guided by competent teachers. However, too much teaching is focused on the whole group and there is a lack of challenge for more able students. The college provision meets the needs of users well. Partnerships are outstanding and develop the curriculum effectively to support students and local initiatives. Care,

guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral support is good, but tutorial support that focuses on students achieving their goals is too variable.

9. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and good for work-based provision. The college judges outcomes accurately as satisfactory, although has been over generous when grading the quality of provision and leadership and management. Safeguarding is good and the college promotes equality and diversity well.

## Main findings

- Overall students' achievements are satisfactory. Success rates are very high in ICT and high in Train to Gain, science and mathematics. Although improving, long course success rates remain just below the most recent national averages for similar colleges. College data indicate significant in-year improvements to the substantial provision in short course literacy and numeracy provision that recorded very low achievement rates in 2009/10.
- The college is focused well on developing students' employability skills, particularly in construction and engineering. Progression on to higher levels of study is very high for advanced level ICT students. Students develop appropriate vocational skills in line with their programme. Attendance is satisfactory, although lateness disrupts too many lessons.
- Students feel particularly safe at college. They value the college as a welcoming and harmonious environment. Students have good opportunities to make informed choices about their own health and well-being and make a positive contribution to the community.
- Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory and are good in science and mathematics, ICT and ESOL. In the best lessons, teachers work well with their students on a variety of imaginative activities and use online resources well. However, weaker lessons are often too teacher led, with insufficient opportunities for active participation and progress particularly for more able students.
- The college lesson observation system does not focus sufficiently on learning and has an over-generous view of the quality of teaching and learning. College records of good or better teaching do not always clearly show why a high grade had been awarded.
- Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers provide clear assessment briefs and work-based assessment planning is good. Feedback on marked work is variable. The use of initial assessment is effective but does not always inform the planning of learning sufficiently.
- The college meets the needs and interests of its users well. It is highly responsive and offers a broad range of provision, giving students a good choice of subjects, levels and qualifications. Partnership working is outstanding. The college focuses very effectively on employability and safeguarding students, and links well with the local community to develop the curriculum.

- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. College staff provide useful and timely advice and support to promote learning, development and employment. Pastoral support and support for students with additional learning needs are good. However, the quality of group and individual tutorials is too varied across the college and its contribution to improving student achievements is not yet fully effective.
- The college has been through challenging times and governors and senior managers have developed a clear strategic direction to meet local needs. However, the targets the college sets itself to meet its ambition of being an outstanding college are not sufficiently challenging. The quality of curriculum management to improve provision is not sufficiently consistent.
- Safeguarding and equality and diversity are good. The college is socially inclusive. Actions to improve performance gaps for minority groups have generally been successful, although the college recognises more needs to be done. Student views are actively sought and acted upon.
- Self-assessment is inclusive and detailed. Data are comprehensive, but not always used in sufficient detail to compare the college's performance against similar colleges. The latest report did not identify some areas for improvement and was too generous in grading some of its provision.
- Financial management is sound and value for money is satisfactory. Following the withdrawal of funds to develop the college's accommodation, the college is in the process of developing a strategy to improve areas that are either not fit for purpose or need refurbishment.

## **What does The College of North West London need to do to improve further?**

- Improve success rates on college-based courses by ensuring that every student's progress is monitored rigorously and that intervention, where there are signs of underperformance, is swift and effective.
- Improve further the quality of learning by ensuring that every student's interest and progress in lessons are consistently encouraged through a range of appropriate and challenging learning activities.
- Further develop the observation of teaching and learning process to focus more clearly on learning.
- Ensure that procedures for self-assessment, quality improvement and performance are applied rigorously in all subject areas and that staff at all levels are held accountable.

## **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

### **What learners like:**

- the good attention to health and safety and being safe
- the friendly, respectful and supportive teachers who act as good role models

- feeling well looked after and organised
- the college's responsiveness to requests from students
- the good guidance and support
- assignments that are marked quickly
- the good library and the availability of computers to use for revision
- the good facilities in plumbing and refrigeration.

**What learners would like to see improved:**

- more consistently helpful tutorials
- more useful feedback on written assignments
- more information technology (IT)-based activities in ESOL classes
- better maintenance of faulty IT equipment
- more information about cut-off dates for the hardship fund
- more information for ESOL students to alleviate the worry concerning paying course fees in the future
- a better-maintained building with a more consistent temperature
- the cost of food and drink in the cafeteria.

**Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

**What employers like:**

- the standard of training given by the college which has allowed apprentices to develop their skills and progress to higher-level courses
- the excellent support from the employer-relationship and business development team
- the impressive way that the course was linked to employers' work.

**What employers would like to see improved:**

No significant areas for improvement identified.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 3**

10. The college has experienced significant turbulence since the last inspection. Capital funds to support a new building were withdrawn. A significant proportion of students are adults and many study ESOL courses; a consequence of this has been large funding reductions. During this time, the college has continued to invest in teaching resources, staff development and provision to meet the needs of the local area. Over the last three years, some aspects of the college's work have much improved, for example ICT and work-based learning. However, long-course retention rates have remained relatively static and whilst achievement rates have improved slightly each year they remain below the national averages of similar colleges.
11. Not all targets set by the college are sufficiently ambitious to meet its aspirational objectives. The areas for improvement noted at the last inspection have not been fully resolved, notably success rates at intermediate level for adults, target setting and the effectiveness of the quality of teaching and learning. However, the college has made steady improvements in attendance and students have much greater opportunities to make more informed choices about their health and well-being. Quality improvement has not led to a sustained improvement in the quality of provision, which varies considerably.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 3**

12. Success rates in ICT are very high and high in Train to Gain, science and mathematics. Apprenticeship success rates are satisfactory. AS- and GCE A-level provision has improved well over three years and is now two percentage points above the national average. However, success rates in retail and education are low.
13. Over the past three years, overall long course success rates have improved, although not as fast as the national averages for similar colleges. Other than adult advanced provision that is now equal to the national average, all age groups and levels are below the national average. The weakest and most significant area being that of intermediate adult provision. Achievement rates (\*) for the significant number of students enrolling on literacy and numeracy short courses have declined over the past three-year period to significantly below the national average, although college in-year data show considerable improvement.
14. The standard of students' work and the development of their skills are satisfactory, although they are very good in ICT and ESOL and engineering. Students develop good practical vocational skills. Progression opportunities into employment for construction and engineering students are good and progression for ICT students into higher education is outstanding. Attendance is steadily improving and at the time of the inspection was judged to be

satisfactory. Students feel safe and enjoy college. They value the college as a welcoming and harmonious environment. The ability of students to make informed choices about their own health and well-being and the positive contribution they bring to the community are good.

15. The college has made satisfactory progress in reducing achievement gaps between different groups. Where the college has recognised underperformance, and taken action, it has generally been successful in reducing the gap. However, at the same time, a number of other groups' achievement rates have continued to widen even further.

(\*) In 2009/10, changes in the recording of these courses to the Skills Funding Agency resulted in success rates not being a sufficiently reliable indicator of performance.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 3**

16. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and in the subject areas inspected, science and mathematics, ICT and ESOL, teaching and learning are good. Many lessons involve students in a range of stimulating activities and group work is generally used effectively. Teachers are knowledgeable and use coaching techniques to keep students on task well. In the better lessons, all students make good progress and develop useful skills and knowledge. Directed questioning reinforces their understanding effectively. The learning experience is considerably better in practical sessions than in theory classes. In practical lessons, teachers recognise different skill levels and plan individual student activities well. However, too many lessons were disrupted by lateness. Many lessons are too teacher led and did not provide opportunities for all students to participate fully. More able students were not provided with enough challenge and stimulation to encourage fully the progress of which they are capable. The pace of lessons was often too slow. Opportunities to formally promote students' understanding of equality and diversity in class are often missed.
17. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory and practical resources and accommodation in much of the engineering and plumbing provision are outstanding. The use and effectiveness of information and learning technology (ILT) seen in lessons was not always sufficiently developed to support learning.
18. Significant investment in teacher training is beginning to show an impact in the quality of teaching and learning. The college has improved its lesson observation system and provides good support for staff to be more effective. However, observation places insufficient emphasis on learning, students' progress and attainment. College records of outstanding and good grades awarded could not always be substantiated. In a few joint observations, inspectors noted that college staff did not sufficiently identify areas for further development.
19. Assessment is satisfactory. The use of initial assessment to plan learning is variable. For example, ESOL teachers are particularly adept at providing

individual learning plans, whereas in other subjects a generalised approach fails to cater sufficiently for the needs of individual students. All subject areas provide clear criteria on assessment briefs. In science, ICT and ESOL, teachers provide very good feedback to help students to improve. However, inspectors noted too many examples where this is not the case. Assessment in work-based provision is good, using a good range of methods to assess students' skills and knowledge.

20. The college meets the needs and interests of its users well. It is highly responsive to the exceptionally diverse needs of a complex local community and offers a broad range of provision giving students a good choice of subjects, levels and qualifications. Programmes are well planned to provide coordinated progression routes. The college makes good use of its strong partnerships with the community and local employers such as Wembley Stadium, Transport for London and the local strategic regeneration group, to provide courses with a clear focus on employability.
21. The college offers a wide and well-established enrichment programme that attracts a large number of students. They benefit from activities such as sport, competitions and off-site visits. Participation and attendance are monitored carefully and the college develops additional events to attract under-represented groups of students. Students benefit from a strong emphasis on developing their employability skills.
22. The use of partnerships to develop the curriculum is outstanding. Long-established partnerships with employers, local schools and agencies and the community have contributed to improving the college's own provision as well as that provided by other organisations. The college works closely with Brent Council to identify and respond to local skills gaps. An effective employment focus is supported particularly well by local employers. For example, college-based engineering and construction students are encouraged to transfer into apprenticeship programmes to continue their training and develop much-improved employment skills.
23. Close links with the Muslim community has extended provision well, particularly for young Muslim women. Effective collaboration with a sector skills council has resulted in the college being awarded the lead role of the National Skills Academy for environmental technologies. Involvement with the local strategic violence reduction group has made an excellent contribution to the safeguarding of young people at the college and in the community.
24. A comprehensive and well-integrated range of services provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for students. The services are centrally located at each of the college's main sites and well-developed plans are in place to extend opening times to improve access for adult students. Information, advice and guidance are effective at the pre-entry stage in placing students on appropriate courses. Initial assessment is used well to plan and deliver a comprehensive range of additional support needs that are put in place in a timely manner. A dedicated unit for visually impaired students supports them well to integrate

into mainstream provision. The college offers students useful advice and guidance on progression to higher level courses and employment.

25. Pastoral support for students is good and students are very positive about how the college supports them through personal difficulties. The college has recognised that its tutorial provision has been too variable in the past and has recently introduced improvements. Useful and accessible electronic resources have been made available to help tutors record individual student progress more effectively. However, despite these improvements, group and individual tutorials remain too variable. For many students, group tutorials provide useful and popular enrichment to their studies, whilst for others these sessions are sometimes used to supplement lesson time. The quality of individual tutorials varies greatly, even between students in the same programme area.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 3**

26. College leaders, through effective consultation, have established a clear strategic direction to meet local needs. The college is highly inclusive and recruits students from a diverse range of ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds, with a strong focus on the most vulnerable groups. An agreed set of key performance indicators are used by managers and governors to monitor the college's progress towards meeting its strategic priorities. However, some of these targets, particularly those relating to success rates, are not sufficiently challenging to realise the college's ambitions to be an outstanding provider. The links between strategic and operational targets are not clear. Strategies have not led to consistent improvements.
27. Communication is good and managers have maintained good staff morale and motivation during a period of significant uncertainty and redundancies. However, the quality of curriculum management to improve provision is too variable. Actions to improve low success rates have in some cases been slow. A recent management training programme is having a positive impact to improve the monitoring of progress and performance management.
28. Governors have a broad range of skills and a sound understanding of the strengths and most of the aspects that the college needs to improve. They support college activities and work positively with senior managers. The finances and accommodation developments are monitored closely and governors have supported decisions in a critically turbulent time with significant reductions in funding and the withdrawal of capital funds to support a new college site at Wembley. Governors' reports provide them with satisfactory information to enable them to ask pertinent questions of how managers are tackling key issues. However, they have not been sufficiently aware of the inconsistent improvements in student outcomes and the quality of provision.
29. Arrangements for safeguarding students are good. Policies, procedures and relevant employment checks are appropriate. Teachers and most other staff have received training in safeguarding, although the college recognises that it needs to implement further training. Managers respond swiftly to any issues

and governors are informed of developments. A high priority is given to health and safety and risk assessments. Designated safeguarding staff have developed close contacts with external agencies and the local safeguarding board. Partnerships with external agencies are highly effective in helping students keep safe. In response to student feedback, the college has enhanced strategies to provide a safer college environment. Students say they feel safe and those who are perceived to be more at risk are targeted to take part in a range of initiatives to raise their awareness of personal safety measures, including bullying and harassment.

30. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college successfully develops its curriculum to meet the needs of local people. Mutual respect is promoted well. Staff development is comprehensive and includes a good range of diversity issues, including mental health and managing difficult behaviour. The equality and diversity group is effective in acting upon equality impact assessments. The profile of staff and governors reflects the significant diversity of the local community and student population.
31. Equality and diversity reports inform governors and managers of the college's successes in narrowing the identified achievement gaps, although the college does not provide a full picture of the performance of different groups. The college recognises the need to further improve the widening achievement gap of some minority groups and young male students. Curriculum teams have appropriate action plans in place. Students with a learning difficulty and/or disability achieve well.
32. A good range of mechanisms have been developed to seek students' views in shaping college activities. A learner voice committee, elected student council and student governors are supported well to actively arrange events and feed back students' views. Feedback from questionnaires, course representatives and student-led focus groups are used to ascertain opinions. Students are positive about the prompt action taken to remedy issues such as extending IT facilities in the library, developing tutorial activities, improving site security and extending the range of healthy food options. In some subject areas students attend academic boards and are involved in self-assessment, but this is not yet consistent across the college. The excellent range of external links, employers, community groups and other stakeholders, informs and shapes the college's provision to promote increased skills and employment.
33. Self-assessment is inclusive; it covers all aspects of the college's provision and services and involves staff at all levels. Data are comprehensive and used to analyse performance, but there is too much emphasis on the rate of improvement. The comparison of success rate data is not always sufficiently clear to support performance judgements. The self-assessment report does not identify all the areas for improvement and over grades some areas. The new course review system is more robust. Early signs, such as improved in-year retention, are positive, but it is too soon to see its full impact. The monitoring of quality improvement plans is now more consistent and rigorous, with particular attention given to courses at risk of not achieving their targets.

Procedures for observing lessons are informed by detailed guidance and training. However, college observers do not always identify accurately the areas for development as too much emphasis is placed on teaching rather than learning. Arrangements to improve the quality of provision are not consistently effective.

34. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Financial management is sound. A significant number of efficiency measures have minimised costs as core funding has reduced. Results, progress and attendance are satisfactory. Resources and equipment are adequate, with good specialist resources in construction and engineering that promote sustainability effectively. The majority of staff have good vocational experience and staff development is planned well. The early stages of developing an alternative accommodation strategy is currently being considered. Some accommodation is too small for the number of students in the class.

## Subject areas

### Science and mathematics

### Grade 2

#### Context

35. The college offers pre-GCSE, GCSE, AS level and GCE A level in mathematics. A range of science subjects are offered through BTEC courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level, access, AS-level and GCE A-level courses. At the time of the inspection, some 35 students aged 14 to 16 years, 204 aged 16 to 18 years and 280 adult students were studying in the area. In association with the Islamic College of Advanced Studies, the college offers AS-level and A-level mathematics and science courses with just over 150 enrolments in 2010/11.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Success rates are high for the majority of science and mathematics courses. They are outstanding for GCE A-level mathematics, A-level physics, BTEC applied science national certificate and the freestanding mathematics level 1 qualification on making sense of data. However, success rates are low in AS-level human biology.
- A\* to C grade achievement in GCSE mathematics is extremely high compared to the most recent national average. High grade achievement is outstanding in mathematics and overall satisfactory in science. However, biology and chemistry AS- and GCE A-level high grades are much lower than the national average. Students achieve a high proportion of very good grades on BTEC applied science intermediate and advanced courses.
- Students' progress, compared to their prior attainment, on most A-level science courses is good and outstanding on GCE A-level physics, but is inadequate on AS- and GCE A-level human biology. The progression of access science and BTEC national certificate students to university in 2009/10 was outstanding.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and students are enthusiastic; students progress well and succeed in their tasks. Teachers provide students with effective individual support. However, extension material is not always used to stretch the more able students. In a minority of lessons students have limited opportunities for individual or cooperative work and are too dependent on the teacher.
- The range of provision of science and mathematics courses is outstanding. A wide range of courses are provided. The students are clear on whether their courses are appropriate for them and initial assessment is used effectively to guide students to the most appropriate courses.
- Overall, partnerships are good. The college provides BTEC applied science courses to Years 10 and 11 students from local schools. The partnership arrangements with the Islamic College for Advanced Studies in providing AS levels and GCE A levels has provided new opportunities for Muslim students in

the local area. Partnerships with employers are under developed and students' understanding of the breadth of career opportunities are not sufficiently clear.

- Support for students is good overall, although there are inconsistencies between courses. Students appreciate the regular individual target setting and support meetings that they have on BTEC science and access science courses. However, AS- and GCE A-level students do not have the same opportunities. AS- and GCE A-level students benefit well from the revision support workshops provided.
- Managers raise expectations and promote ambition well. Senior managers, curriculum managers and their teams have regular course review meetings that focus on driving up success, retention and achievement rates. Staff are fully focused on further improving outcomes for students.
- The promotion of safeguarding and equality and diversity is good. Staff ensure safe working practices in laboratories and train students to risk assess. Managers identify achievement gaps between different groups of students and equality and diversity monitoring and action planning occur regularly. Female Muslim students are very well represented on AS- and GCE A-level courses.
- Managers use self-assessment effectively to improve the quality of provision and students' outcomes. Self-assessment and lesson observation reports are broadly accurate and appropriate targets for improvement are demanding and appropriately reviewed.
- Resources in mathematics and science are good. Recent expansion in student numbers has put pressure on accommodation, but students are satisfied with the resources that they use, although access to laboratories is only available at the Willesden site.

### **What does The College of North West London need to do to improve further?**

- Further improve teaching and learning by developing the use of extension activities and cooperative work by students in lessons.
- Share good practice on individual student target setting, to ensure that tutorial support for students is consistently good across the whole range of tutors and provision.

## Engineering and manufacturing technologies

## Grade 3

### Context

36. The college offers a broad range of full- and part-time engineering programmes in electrical, electronic, welding, motor vehicle and services programmes, ranging from foundation to higher levels. At the time of the inspection, approximately 1,830 students were studying college-based programmes, 123 students were on apprenticeships and 38 on Train to Gain. Of those, 35 are under 16 years of age, 462 are aged 16 to 18 and 1,356 are adults.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Overall, long course success rates are satisfactory. Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 improved significantly in 2009/10 and are now above the most recent national average. However, adult success rates declined and are now below the national average. Individual course success rates range from good to inadequate.
- Success and completion within the agreed time rates for the small number of apprentices rose significantly in 2009/10 and are now very high. For Train to Gain learners, rates are satisfactory.
- Students develop good practical vocational skills. They pay good attention to health and safety procedures and were able to articulate competently how to deal with a safety incident in workshops. Progress to higher levels of study is good for college-based younger students. Students enjoy college, although overall attendance is satisfactory rather than good.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Practical sessions are effective and help students develop their skills well. During these lessons, teachers use coaching skills effectively. However, theory lessons are generally characterised by insufficient recognition by teachers, to plan lessons that meet the needs of all students and their abilities. A whole-class, teacher-led approach is used too often. Too few teaching strategies are used to encourage and promote learning effectively and the use of ILT to enhance learning is under developed.
- Assessment for work-based learners is good. Course work is marked with detailed feedback and supports effective ways in which the student can improve further. However, for students on college-based programmes, feedback is often brief and generally not helpful.
- The range of provision is very good. The specialist engineering resources are of a very high standard. The focus on employability in the department is strong and partnerships with employers are particularly effective. For example, a shared work placement scheme is provided to ensure apprentices can complete the full range of training and specialist courses developed to meet industry needs.
- Students benefit well from involvement with a range of enrichment activities including industry days and Eco-build. They gain additional understanding of

sustainable industry methods through the technology and resources available at college.

- Support and guidance for students are satisfactory. Initial assessment is used well for apprentices. However, for college-based students its use is too variable and does not inform the planning of teaching and learning sufficiently. Overall, group and individual tutorials are satisfactory.
- Leadership and management are good. The recent introduction of a much improved performance monitoring system has started to show an early positive impact on the quality of provision. Regular meetings at all levels monitor closely key student performance indicators and appropriate actions are starting to improve low attendance and retention.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Students' awareness is raised appropriately through cross-college and tutorial activities. 'Women into engineering' is positively promoted. However, too many teachers fail to plan and promote equality and diversity in their lessons.
- The college over graded the quality of engineering provision. The observation of teaching and learning is not sufficiently robust to support the high number of good or better grades awarded. In too many cases, the records do not clearly explain why a grade has been given. The college recognises this as an area for further development.

### **What does The College of North West London need to do to improve further?**

- Improve success rates on adult long courses by rigorously monitoring students' progress and taking swift action for those at risk of not achieving.
- Improve the teaching and learning in theory lessons by developing effective strategies that check students' understanding; introduce a range of activities that meets all students' needs and utilise ILT to engage students and inspire learning.
- Ensure that assessment feedback on college-based provision enables students to understand clearly what they need to do to improve their performance.
- Ensure that the arrangements for the observations of teaching and learning are thoroughly and rigorously focused on learning and clearly identify areas for improvement.

## Construction, planning and the built environment

## Grade 3

### Context

37. The college provides courses at entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced level in brickwork, painting and decorating, carpentry, plastering, gas, heating and ventilation, refrigeration, and plumbing, at award, certificate and a small range of BTEC programmes. At the time of inspection there were 1,122 students studying on either full- or part-time courses, of whom 215 were aged 16 to 18 and 63 aged 14 to 16 years. Work-based learning in construction is provided to 69 apprentices and 148 Train to Gain students.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Overall, success rates on long courses are satisfactory. Previously, success rates have been suppressed by a poorly-performing plumbing course that has now ceased. College data suggest that in-year retention has improved. Success and completion rates within the agreed time are good for Train to Gain and satisfactory for learners on apprenticeships.
- Students develop good practical skills which enable them to work to industry standards and help progression into work. The lack of work experience for some students has a negative impact on their progress and readiness for industry.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers in practical lessons support and promote learning well. In the better theory lessons, students work well with a variety of activities, and learning and progress are regularly checked. However, in the less effective theory sessions, classes are too teacher led, fail to interest and challenge students, and generally fail to use learning resources effectively. Assessment is carried out well and meets the needs of students and awarding body requirements.
- Students have an appropriate awareness of health and safety arrangements, and take responsibility for their own safe working practices. In workplace reviews, sufficient emphasis is placed on the need for constant awareness and understanding in relation to safety.
- The setting of individual targets for students is satisfactory, with actions appropriately monitored by tutors. A recently-introduced online tracking system is proving to be much more effective in monitoring students' progress.
- The needs and interests of students are met effectively. The college offers a broad range of courses at all levels. Work-based routes are being developed to encourage more apprenticeship options.
- Much of the accommodation is excellent. The Telford Building houses gas, brickwork, plastering and refrigeration and is at the forefront of new technology in sustainability.
- The college effectively showcases a significant number of students' skills to local employers. For example, around 500 students take part in an annual

competition of practical tests. Offers of employment follow for some students. The college provides training to pupils with moderate learning difficulties to develop basic construction skills and improve social interaction.

- Care, guidance and support for students are satisfactory. From initial advice, enrolment, initial assessment and pastoral support, students value the range and extent of services available. Students identified with additional support needs are supported well. Students have a good rapport with staff. Overall, group and individual tutorials are satisfactory, but the quality of tutorials is too variable.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Targets set to improve the provision are not sufficiently challenging. Comparison is focused on meeting national averages rather than those of more successful providers. Actions to improve provision have been slow. However, recent changes and closer performance monitoring are beginning to secure improvements.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Through cross-college activities and tutorial activities, student awareness is raised appropriately. However, too many teachers fail to plan and promote equality and diversity in their lessons. Actions to improve success rate gaps between minority groups have not been sufficiently effective.
- The self-assessment grade was over generous. It included useful analysis of data, but information on the impact of teaching and learning and equality and diversity were insufficiently detailed. The quality of course reviews is too varied. A recent position statement is a better assessment, and contains useful information for staff and managers to work on their priorities.

### **What does The College of North West London need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the success rates on long courses by monitoring student progress rigorously and taking swift actions for those at risk of not achieving.
- Improve the teaching and learning for theory lessons by developing effective strategies that check students' understanding, introduce a range of activities that meet all students' needs and make learning more enjoyable.
- Reduce the variability between courses by systematic quality assurance that actively supports improvements and shares best practice.

## Information and communication technology (ICT)

## Grade 1

### Context

38. The college offers ICT courses at both of its sites. Courses are available from entry to advanced level and beyond into higher education. ICT practitioner and user qualifications are available in either full- or part-time study options. Approximately 750 students are currently enrolled, with around half attending each site, and 14 pupils aged 14 to 16 are enrolled on a work-related intermediate qualification. The majority of learners are adults and from minority ethnic heritage and/or have English as their second language.

### Key findings

- Success rates are outstanding in the majority of courses. Most are significantly and consistently above national averages for similar colleges. Overall, success rates have considerably improved since the last inspection. College data suggest that current retention rates are high and students are attending well.
- Students progress well. On advanced courses, the vast majority progress to either higher education or into work. Approximately 56% of students satisfactorily progress from intermediate to advanced programmes. Current students are making good progress towards a successful outcome of their course.
- Students quickly develop very good ICT skills relevant to their chosen course. These include the acquisition of additional skills through innovative college-based projects. The quality of student work is good and the percentage of students achieving high grades is significantly above national averages.
- The opportunities for students to improve their economic well-being are significant. Advanced-level students complete additional vendor qualifications as part of their course which improves their employability. Very good course design enables part-time students to move quickly through qualifications, enabling them to gain higher-level qualifications.
- Teaching and learning are good and in a few subject areas, outstanding. In the best classes teaching is very well planned, includes a wide variety of teaching methods and strongly reinforces and checks learning has taken place. Assessment is good and well planned. Students understand their assessment criteria. Work is marked quickly and constructive feedback gives students the opportunity to improve their grades.
- Courses meet the needs of students very well. Courses are offered from entry levels to higher education for both ICT users and ICT practitioners. The college places a strong emphasis on developing employability skills. All full-time ICT practitioner students have the opportunity of work placement. However, very little of this is with employers, where links are under developed.
- Partnership arrangements are good. The college works with a wide range of partners for the personal development and care of students. Links are

particularly strong in this curriculum area for students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

- Support for students is outstanding. Students for whom English is not their first language have highly effective support, either through additional discrete English language tuition or within their ICT class. The excellent and highly-valued tutorial system is enabling students to be, and feel, fully supported.
- The curriculum is very well managed. The management team has set very high standards since the last inspection and has significantly improved the provision. Internal communications with staff are outstanding and they are well supported and developed. Outstanding performance-monitoring arrangements have raised standards significantly.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are good. All staff have received recent training. Students feel safe and understand the arrangements that the college has made to ensure their safety and welfare. Particularly good attention is given to the reinforcement of e-safety.
- The promotion of equality and support for diversity are good. Staff identify clearly the most vulnerable students and monitor closely the achievement of these students. A strong ethos of mutual respect enables the majority of different groups of students to achieve as well as each other. Whole-faculty equality and diversity events raise students' understanding. However, the promotion within lessons is not always sufficiently well planned.
- The self-assessment report indicates clearly the college has a good understanding of the quality of ICT provision. All staff participate in its formulation through a frequent and thorough course review process which includes the views of students. Effective development planning continues to improve provision at course and departmental level.

### **What does The College of North West London need to do to improve further?**

- Further develop relationships with employers to improve the availability and quality of real-life work experience by developing closer links with local employers who have significant ICT operations.

## Literacy and numeracy

## Grade 3

### Context

39. The college offers full- and part-time courses in literacy and numeracy from entry to intermediate level at both campuses and in the workplace. Of the 2,314 students currently enrolled, 73 are aged under 16 years and 1,040 are aged 16 to 18 years. The number of students on discrete programmes is 763, and 631 are studying functional skills English and 526 functional skills mathematics. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is 732. Female students account for 43% of the student population.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are inadequate. Due to changes in the reporting of success rates in 2009/10, achievement rates have been used to inform inspection judgements. Overall, many of the significant course achievement rates declined in 2009/10 and are too low. Although, actions to improve from the start of the academic year have resulted in the college reporting in-year achievement rates improving significantly.
- Students make satisfactory progress. Students enjoy their lessons and make appropriate progress. Their employability skills are much improved and progression from literacy and numeracy provision to the college's vocational courses is good. The standard of students' work is at least satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the majority of lessons students develop their skills through a range of appropriate activities and teachers demonstrate good classroom management skills. The use of ICT learning resources encourages students to participate actively in their learning. However, an over reliance on group work prevents too many students focusing on developing specific individual skills.
- Overall, assessment is satisfactory. Assessment is fair, accurate and regular. However, too few students have effective individual learning plans and insufficient use is made of monitoring students' progress to set challenging targets.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Initial assessment is used well to ensure students are placed on the appropriate courses and to support those with identified additional learning needs. Additional support is good and reviewed regularly. Pastoral support is effective. Partnership arrangements with local agencies support students well onto literacy and numeracy courses.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although initially slow to respond to declining achievement rates, since the start of the academic year changes to improve provision have been swift and effective. Managers have established a robust quality-improvement structure. Responsibility for data management, retention monitoring and identifying and supporting students who are at risk of

not achieving are clearly understood by all staff. Strategies to improve attendance are having a positive impact.

- The college has recognised and taken action to develop staff understanding in improving the planning of lessons to meet individual students' needs and to make more effective use of individual learning plans. However, the implementation of both has not been fully realised across the provision. The majority of tutors are appropriately qualified, although too few vocational tutors are qualified to teach literacy or numeracy.
- Students feel particularly safe at college and fully understand their rights and responsibilities. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Students are encouraged to explore and discuss human rights issues during lessons and they are actively involved in designing and organising activities for Diversity Day.
- Self-assessment is inclusive and evaluative. Data are used effectively and quality improvement plans are reviewed regularly and monitor progress well. However, the full impact of recent changes is yet to be fully realised.

### **What does The College of North West London need to do to improve further?**

- Maintain the improved in-year retention and achievement rates by monitoring rigorously individual students' progress and taking swift actions for those at risk of not achieving.
- Ensure that all staff fully understand and plan effectively to meet the needs of all students in lessons and implement robust individual learning plans that monitor progress effectively and set specific and individual targets.
- Ensure that all vocational teachers have the appropriate specialist skills needed to teach literacy and numeracy effectively to classes with mixed abilities.

## English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

## Grade 2

### Context

40. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,932 students on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes, of whom 80% attend lessons at entry level. Some 85% of students are adults, 13% receive language support and 65% are female. Programmes range from pre-entry to intermediate level and are taught throughout the day and evening. In addition, six ESOL courses combine with subjects such as ICT, hairdressing and fashion.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Success and achievement rates have remained consistent over the past three years. Many of the students in beginner classes have had little or no access to education in their country of origin. Pass rates for entry level and reading at level 1 are high. Success rates are high for students aged 16 to 18 years. Success rates for work-based provision are high. However, in 2009/10, pass rates at level 2 in writing were too low. At the time of the inspection, examination pass rates for 2010/11 were good.
- The development of language and citizenship skills is very good. The younger students extend their skills and understanding of study options well through tasters on aspects such as law and sociology. Students develop excellent employability skills. Seventy adult students gained employment through the 'Make English Work' programme.
- Students enjoy their learning very much. Progress is good and in the best lessons very rapid. Progression to higher levels is good. Of the students enrolled in 2009/10, most returned to the college, either to another ESOL course or to mainstream provision. Students feel very safe in the college.
- Teaching and learning are good. The analysis of student language is good and teachers use the outcomes of assessment well to plan learning. This was a weakness in the previous inspection and is now a strength. Staff are well qualified and use their professional skills well to plan and teach. They accurately assess the appropriate level of challenge for individual students. Topics are relevant to the lives of students.
- In most lessons, teachers have good strategies to meet the needs of individual students. The use of resources is good and online resources are used well to monitor learning. There is good learning of vocabulary and grammar. However, in some lessons teachers pay insufficient attention in improving students' spoken language. Some classrooms are too small for the number of students.
- The range of provision is extensive and meets the needs of the students very well. Students have good access to language support on mainstream vocational courses and the college offers in-company language training.
- Partnerships are effective. The college works well with Brent local authority and its schools to provide courses for young people. The college arranges work

placements well for adults and young people with the voluntary sector and employers. Students benefit well from outside speakers from organisations such as health professionals, careers advisers and the police.

- Support for students is good. Teachers and students use individual and group tutorials well to review progress. They set clear targets for learning and plan well for long-term progression, including transfer to vocational and academic courses. Information, advice and guidance are effective.
- Leadership and management are good. Management has put in place good strategies at management and teacher level to improve the accuracy of data and timeliness of decisions on examination targets. Curriculum teams use data analysis and risk assessment meetings effectively to manage potentially poor results and low attendance. However, the number of students who do not turn up for their examinations remains too high.
- Communication is good. Curriculum managers and teachers appreciate the consultative style of senior management and the opportunities for continuous professional development. The strategy to enhance the quality of teaching and learning is effective. Observers evaluate lessons well, although there is too much focus on teaching rather than learning.
- The promotion of equality and support for diversity are good. The college has identified minority groups with success rates below target. It has taken effective action to provide longer courses to enable these groups to achieve better.
- The self-assessment report broadly reflects the provision and areas for improvement but it is not always sufficiently focused and concise.

### **What does The College of North West London need to do to improve further?**

- Provide thorough feedback on the students' spoken language in order to develop their speaking skills.
- Thoroughly plan and communicate appropriate examination dates to ensure that as many students as possible attend and gain qualifications.
- Ensure that the self-assessment report captures the provision succinctly in order to judge performance and develop provision.

## **Information about the inspection**

41. Five of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the college's Vice Principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
42. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**The College of North West London**  
**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>				
Full-time learners	2,488	1,215	1,273	
Part-time learners	4,559	275	3,571	713
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	3			
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3			
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3			
How well do learners progress?	3			
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3			
How safe do learners feel?	2			
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2			
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2			
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3			
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2			
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1			
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3			
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>			
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3			
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2			
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2			
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2			
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3			
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3			

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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