

The Working Men's College

Specialist designated institution

Inspection dates		18-23 March 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding-1
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is outstanding because:

- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications is very high and has increased steadily over the last three years. Success rates are significantly above national averages for nearly all subjects.
- Learners make outstanding progress. Most learners have very low starting points and many have significant barriers to learning and they achieve their qualifications and progress very well.
- The standard of learners' work is very high, with many outstanding examples on display throughout the college. The college celebrates the high standard of work through exhibitions and fashion shows.
- Learners develop many additional skills, gaining confidence and enhancing their lives and their employability. Many learners report that their lives have changed significantly as a result of their college experience.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Tutors have high expectations of all learners who are highly motivated and undertake further independent study and research.
- Care and support for learners are outstanding, covering all aspects of study, pastoral care and financial support. Adapted resources are available for those learners who need them as well as childcare facilities.
- Tutors make very effective use of initial assessment to identify learners' starting points and progress is monitored carefully to ensure that learners get the support they need to achieve. Peer support is well developed.
- Information, advice and guidance are outstanding and are provided by qualified and experienced education career guidance workers in all centres. The college has excellent partnership arrangements with local training providers and recruitment agencies.
- Leadership and management are excellent. Governors and senior managers set a clear strategic plan with high expectations and challenging targets.
- The promotion of equality and diversity across the college is outstanding. The college has a very inclusive and stimulating ethos which promotes the understanding of cultural diversity and social inclusion extremely well.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the provision by improving certain aspects within subject sector areas such as
 - improving the attendance and punctuality on a small number of courses in the arts by challenging lateness and absence
 - producing more precise and focused targets for learners in some language courses
 - reducing the few remaining gaps in achievement on some courses.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners' achievements are outstanding. Overall success rates have improved steadily for three successive years and are above national averages. Success rates for the large majority of courses are significantly above national averages. The large majority of learners come from the most deprived areas of Camden and all learners make excellent progress relative to their starting points. The progress of some learners from very low starting points is exceptional with outstanding achievement. ▪ Learners enjoy their learning and the standard of learners' work is in many cases exceptional. The quality of the work in ceramics and fashion is excellent with some very creative work. The college has many examples of outstanding visual art work displayed throughout the premises. Learners are very proud of their work and talk enthusiastically about their achievements. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners talk articulately about how they can now help their children with homework. ▪ Managers have identified achievement gaps between various groups of learners. These are relatively small and very effective action has been taken to reduce these differences. Gaps between different ethnic groups, postcodes, and learners with disabilities are all now insignificant. There are no performance differences for gender, and those learners requiring additional support perform as well as any others. ▪ Learners develop excellent personal and social skills. A large majority of learners are involved in additional activities such as fundraising and community work. They develop enhanced interpersonal skills and gain in confidence and self-esteem. Many learners report that their college experience has been life changing and enabled them to become more self-sufficient in the community. ▪ Learners develop excellent employability skills and gain an excellent understanding of the career and progression opportunities open to them. Many learners progress into employment or become self-employed as a result of the expert information, advice and guidance provided by college staff. ▪ The large majority of learners progress to further study. A very large majority of fashion learners have progressed onto graduate courses. Many learners have progressed from a basic ESOL course to qualifications in other subject areas and then onto higher level qualifications. Several learners have progressed to postgraduate qualifications. 	
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding, as reflected in the outstanding outcomes for learners. They make excellent progress in developing a particularly wide range of practical, research, technical and language skills while gaining much confidence to progress onto higher level courses, volunteering or employment opportunities. 	

- Tutors have high expectations of all learners and, as a result, learners are highly motivated to refine their skills and use specialist processes and techniques. They undertake further independent study or research tasks. For example, one ESOL class set up their own class-based Facebook page to exchange ideas and send homework to their tutor and to receive feedback.
- The care and support for learners are outstanding. A well organised, multi-lingual team of additional learning support workers, financial and welfare advisers and counsellors provide a comprehensive support package to learners at all centres. Financial support is available for learning materials and transport. The college provides specially adapted resources for learners who require them, as well as childcare in community classes.
- Tutors plan lessons exceptionally well and often involve learners in negotiating challenging project briefs. Tutors structure lessons with a good and wide range of interesting and relevant learning activities which build on prior learning and extend learners' knowledge and skills very well. Tutors ensure that learners develop employability skills and an understanding of citizenship to a high standard.
- Learners have fun and engage in stimulating, interactive learning activities, in some cases imaginative games, which help them to develop their speaking and listening skills. Many practical lessons are often learner led and learners are very industrious. Tutors make very good use of learning resources and materials. Tutors use information and learning technology (ILT) very effectively to enhance learning in practical lessons and for the presentation, practice and revision of languages. Learners in practical sessions benefit greatly from high quality specialist facilities and machinery.
- Tutors make very effective use of assessment processes. Initial and diagnostic assessments clearly identify learners' starting points. Results are used very well to set individual targets and contribute to schemes of work. Individual learning targets are relevant and challenging. However, in language classes the quality of targets is variable.
- Tutors generally use individual learning plans extremely well to review learners' progress and set new targets. Learners are totally involved in this process and in some ESOL classes learners review their progress in small groups to help them articulate how attending classes has impacted on their lives before discussing their progress with their tutor.
- Tutors monitor progress exceptionally well during lessons and correct errors very effectively. They give learners excellent critical feedback on the creative direction of their work. Learners have excellent opportunities to correct each other's work and benefit from peer support. The additional learning support is particularly effective in helping less confident learners or those with mental health problems. Tutors collaborate well with support workers who receive clear guidance and instructions in learning plans.
- Learners' homework is promptly marked, with very helpful comments using a well understood college marking scheme in ESOL classes. The large majority of tutors systematically check learners' progress and performance during lessons and give very pertinent and encouraging verbal feedback.
- Learners develop their English language and literacy skills very well, including in practical lessons by completing challenging research tasks, presentations or learner blogs. Learners make very good progress in developing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills both in class and through independent study or by attending the ESOL workshops. However, the teaching of numeracy skills is less developed.
- The information, advice and guidance are outstanding. They are provided by qualified and experienced education and career guidance workers in all centres. Excellent partnership arrangements result in very informative events during which learners receive information from local training providers and recruitment agencies. The college has excellent industry and employer links which provide learners with information on the fashion sector's expectations and employment opportunities, including self-employment.
- The promotion of equality and diversity across the college is outstanding. An all-inclusive and stimulating ethos embraces all learners, staff and visitors as soon as they walk into the building.

Tutors engage learners in lessons with a wide range of culturally diverse arts and crafts and other stimuli. Learners' experiences and contributions are highly valued in lessons and the college celebrates learners' achievements and successes through high profile events.

Visual arts Community learning

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding for learners and are reflected in the very high achievement and success rates, but learners' punctuality and attendance rates are low on a few courses.
- Tutors have high expectations and set challenging projects requiring detailed research and planning. Learners benefit from outstanding support with the creative and technical elements of their work and through highly effective peer feedback. Learners appreciate the insights and expertise of their tutors who provide highly accurate critiques of their work. Tutors are exacting in their focus on learners' progress. Progression advice and support are excellent for preparation for interviews and final portfolio development.
- Inspiring learner-centred tasks promote swift development of learners' skills and independent learning. Learners are motivated by innovative briefs for fashion catwalk shows and high profile opportunities to exhibit at national institutions. Learners are actively engaged in projects which explore industry standards, promote realistic working contexts and reflect the expectations of employers and clients. Learners develop a strong understanding of how skills are applied in industry contexts.
- Highly detailed, inspiring briefs support learning very well. Specialist knowledge, guidance and skilfully produced resources promote learners' individual artistic goals and learners become exceptionally proficient in working with specialist materials.
- Learners practise and refine skills at a good pace, learn specialist processes and apply intricate techniques in arts and crafts. During industrious, calm and focused sessions, much learning is initiated by learners. Independent learning is developed through peer interaction, for example discussions on techniques and materials in glass and sculpture and illustration sessions.
- Learners use specialist equipment with proficiency and develop excellent research and planning skills. Excellent communication and ICT skills are developed, for example in learners' presentations and blogs. Learners' use of technical vocabulary is satisfactory.
- Tutors' feedback and guidance support learning goals and are sharply focused on improving learners' skills in preparation for working successfully in industry and higher education. Expert critical feedback pinpoints actions to improve work, for example to revisit a technique, research artists or manipulate materials to explore the effects of different processes. However, feedback is not often formally recorded by tutors or noted by learners.
- Learners are assessed frequently against agreed individualised learning targets, and in accredited learning detailed written tutor assessment promotes improvement. Excellent tutor demonstration and consistent encouragement inspire learners to explore materials and processes. In the best sessions, detailed actions support progress, for example during portfolio development in a graphics session. Learning is highly individualised to learners' needs on accredited provision, but assessment of progress is inconsistent in a minority of non-accredited programmes.
- Tutors use ILT very effectively to enhance learning and to record learner progress. For example, glass making, ceramics, sculpture and textile learners have work uploaded onto excellent blogs; however, a small minority of tutors do not fully utilise technology to support all aspects of the learning process.
- Outstanding learners' work and achievements are celebrated widely across the college and at notable external events and exhibitions. Learners progress to prestigious higher education institutions.

- Equality and diversity are promoted very effectively in sessions with culturally diverse resources exploring different arts and crafts. Learners are fully involved in decision making and work together very effectively. Learners benefit from the diversity of their cultural backgrounds, respecting individual differences. In a minority of sessions, equality and diversity are less prominent and not fully considered through subject materials.

Languages, literature and culture Community learning

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which correlates well with the good outcomes for learners. Tutors set high expectations by using challenging learning activities and materials within classes. They motivate learners to make good progress through their enthusiastic delivery and support.
- In most lessons, tutors use their very good understanding of individual learners' needs and abilities to ensure that all learners participate well and to stretch those who are more able. They monitor learners' in-class progress effectively and provide good support where needed, both in and out of class. Tutors structure their lessons well to build on learners' prior learning.
- Tutors use good quality technology and learning resources very well to make the presentation, practice and revision of language clear and interesting for learners. They use an extensive range of good quality resources, such as mini-whiteboards, games and voice recordings to make learning enjoyable.
- Learning is highly effective because learners extend their skills and knowledge of vocabulary and language structure through a good range of interesting and relevant learning activities. Their tutors, who are native language speakers, develop learners' confidence in speaking and writing in a foreign language through pair work, oral presentations and answering questions aloud. A large proportion of language students who speak English as an additional language learn very effectively through the extensive use of the target language.
- Tutors promote independent learning effectively by encouraging learners to use online materials, external websites for practising language and the well-stocked library. They set learners regular homework to enhance in-class learning and one group of Spanish learners regularly uses a class blog to extend their learning. Tutors routinely mark learners' homework and provide the learners with good feedback to help them correct any errors.
- Many learners have suitable learning targets and their progress is monitored regularly by tutors; however, for others this process is less effective. Learners receive regular feedback on their progress in class, but not all are given sufficient advice to help them improve their overall skills.
- Learners develop good computer skills by using online learning resources and through independent study. Through raising their awareness of language, many learners also improve their literacy skills. Where relevant, tutors use language opportunities to help learners further develop their numeracy skills, such as using the 24-hour clock.
- Learners receive very clear pre-course information, guidance and induction. The well-structured courses enable learners to gain a good understanding of how they can progress onto further study in languages at the college.
- Tutors promote a good understanding of different cultures because they plan diversity well into their lessons. Learners take part in a very good range of additional cultural activities, such as seeing Italian films at a restaurant and visiting the theatre. Many learners, who are unable to afford course fees, are supported financially by the college to participate in language learning.

ESOL Community learning

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and this reflects the very high outcomes for learners. The well-qualified, empathetic and knowledgeable tutors engage very well with all learners and have very high expectations of them. As a result, learners are highly motivated, take much pride in their substantial achievements and are very eager to improve. The large majority consistently make excellent and sustained progress in lessons, and increase their confidence and self-esteem greatly.
- Care and support for learners are outstanding and highly appreciated by learners. A large number of learners receive well-planned and highly effective additional learning support in lessons and workshops. Personal care is extremely high and includes timely referrals to counselling, or to other agencies such as housing services. The excellent access to ESOL learner representatives for personal issues, together with financial support for transport or childcare, helps learners with multiple barriers complete courses successfully.
- Staff design very stimulating and interactive activities to ensure full learner participation and effective practice of speaking and learning skills. Learners have much fun completing their challenging tasks and using a large variety of information and learning technology, such as interactive whiteboards, digital cameras and laptops. Learners work extremely well in teams and clearly enjoy helping peers and sharing experiences and learning strategies. Learners contribute very well in discussions, language presentations, surveys and in matching exercises in pairs.
- The very best aspects of teaching and learning include systematic correction of errors, much practice of intonation patterns, imaginative teaching and learning strategies such as research on local politicians before planning questions for role-play in an entry level lesson. Other stimulating and highly effective activities included a board game on the use of a point of grammar and personal experiences. In the best lessons, learners are actively encouraged to correct peers, help each other when using laptops, develop independent learning and to use the interactive whiteboards to provide answers.
- Assessment processes are comprehensive and robust. The initial diagnostic assessment is very effective in assessing all four language skills, and in identifying needs for learning or learner support early on courses. Target setting with learners is very effective and leads to sufficiently challenging and specific individual learning goals. The on-going assessment includes highly effective verbal feedback to learners and outstanding written feedback on homework. On many courses, the detailed reviews of progress inform the planning of further learning very well.
- Learners develop their English language and literacy skills very well. They are encouraged well to develop their ICT skills. Although the development of mathematics is integrated on many courses, this is not systematic across all programmes.
- Information, advice and guidance are outstanding and include very effective partnership working for referrals from other providers or agencies, resulting in good learner progression onto further learning and training, employment and much volunteering. Learners have access to very experienced education and career advisers, who speak a large variety of different languages. Staff and student representatives are very positive and motivational role models, raising learners' aspirations.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in learning is outstanding. Tutors pay particularly good attention to individual learning needs and styles. More able learners access a good variety of well-planned extension activities. Tutors foster a work ethos strongly focused on respect, teamwork and learning from each other, resulting in very productive and supportive learning communities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management**Outstanding**

- The Principal's and senior managers' excellent leadership and clear strategic direction align very closely with The Working Men's College's mission. When devising the strategic plan, the Principal and senior managers set very high expectations and consult extensively with learners, staff, partners and community representatives. This results in a highly relevant strategic direction that is targeted well at the needs of the local population and employers, increasing ESOL and vocational programmes and strengthening employer engagement.
- Managers use data very well to identify trends, investigate these and instigate improvements. They set and monitor challenging targets that successfully increased success rates over the last three years. Managers significantly improved the reliability of outcomes data on non-accredited courses through rigorous standardisation and monitoring of learners' targets and reviews.
- Governors have developed a very thorough understanding of all aspects of work through highly effective curriculum links, senior managers' reports and committee meetings. They use their expertise productively and constructively to support and challenge progress with the strategic plan, self-assessment report and quality improvement plan. Governors monitor diligently financial management and are fully involved in developing resources and the infrastructure.
- The Working Men's College's exemplary partnerships greatly enhance the curriculum offer, particularly through joint delivery of subjects such as English, ICT, ESOL and mathematics with vocational subjects. Learners benefit greatly from partners' sponsorship and involvement in events and exhibitions that showcase their work. Managers collaborate productively with The Working Men's College's partners to ensure the college's course offer complements other providers' provision and offers learners well-devised progression routes.
- Managers have significantly improved and refined the arrangements for observing and judging the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. They carry out very accurate observations of tutors' lessons, providing them with feedback that is used productively within staff appraisal and to set actions for improvement. Tutors receive highly effective staff development, mentoring and peer support that link strongly to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Self-assessment is extremely self-critical, accurate and inclusive. Managers recognise very incisively what still needs to be improved and use quality improvement plans to make consolidated and sustainable progress. However, visual arts managers have not self-assessed sufficiently the non-accredited learning.
- Learners have excellent and wide ranging mechanisms for providing their views, which managers take very seriously. Highly effective student governors and class representatives influence significantly the college's decision making. The Principal fosters an ethos where learners' views are valued by maintaining a highly visibility within the college and routinely engages learners in conversation.
- Excellent curriculum management and very close monitoring of the quality of the provision are leading to outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. Tutors involve themselves fully within course design to meet successfully the needs of identified priority groups, facilitate progression and increase enrolments. Staff ensure learning is widely accessible through the use of an extensive range of community venues.
- The Working Men's College's outstanding promotion of equality and diversity has led to a highly inclusive environment that truly represents the local community. Staff and learners celebrate extensively the vastly diverse range of cultural backgrounds within events and lessons. Managers' positive action has increased considerably the number of male, young and community language speaking learning support assistants to better represent the learner population
- As a result of staff training in disability, mental health and vulnerable learners, the proportion of learners declaring a learning difficulty or disability has increased. These learners receive excellent support and achieve well. Managers monitor very carefully success rates by different

groups and take highly effective action to address any imbalances which has helped raise achievement by specific groups of learners.

- The Working Men's College meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Governors, managers and staff are well trained in their responsibilities and place a high priority on learners' welfare. Managers thoroughly investigate learners' safeguarding issues, but records of these are not always held in one place or reported comprehensively to governors.
- Staff risk assess activities and venues thoroughly and learners feel safe at the college. The Working Men's College has invested significantly in improving security and most staff and learners adhere well to the new arrangements.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

The Working Men's College

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	1	1
Outcomes for learners	1	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	1	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Visual Arts	1
Languages, literature and culture	2
ESOL	1

Provider details

The Working Men's College	
Type of provider	Independent specialist college
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 62
	Part-time: 4,204
Principal	Satnam Gill
Date of previous inspection	June 2008
Website address	www.wmcollege.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	21	44	n/a	n/a
Part-time	61	2948	18	574	n/a	24	n/a	n/a
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	3	6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of learners aged 14-16	n/a							
Number of community learners	439							
Number of employability learners	n/a							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute 							

Additional socio-economic information

The Working Men's College is one of the four designated specialist colleges in London. It is the oldest adult education institution in Europe and draws its learners from the Borough of Camden and adjoining areas of central and north London. It provides a range of programmes for learners to help them progress to further education or employment. Camden is a very diverse community with half the residents qualified at degree level or higher. School leaver attainment is lower than the national average. The wards which surround the college have very high levels of multiple deprivation. Twenty seven per cent of residents are members of minority ethnic communities.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Charles Clark HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the deputy principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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