

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Working Men's College**

**14 May 2004**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, **or**
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Working Men's College

### Contents

#### Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	3
Overall judgement	3
Grades	3
Key findings	4
What learners like about Working Men's College	9
What learners think Working Men's College could improve	9
Key challenges for Working Men's College	10

#### Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	14
Equality of opportunity	15
Quality assurance	17
Information & communications technology	19
Health, social care & public services	22
Visual & performing arts & media	25
English, languages & communications	28
Foundation programmes	31

## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Working Men's College (WMC) is a designated institution in the further education sector. It was established in 1854 to provide education for manual workers. It is situated in the borough of Camden in central London, and is one of the oldest adult education colleges in England. WMC provides courses and other learning activities in five main areas of learning, including community-based foundation programmes. The Working Men's College receives funding from London Central Learning and Skills Council.

2. The London Borough of Camden has a diverse population with a significant proportion from minority ethnic groups, many of whom experience particularly high levels of unemployment. In 2001, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups was 15.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 9.1 per cent. In 2003, the proportion of Camden school leavers who gained five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 49.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 52.9 per cent.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Information & communications technology

3. During 2002-03, the college ran 249 courses in information and communications technology (ICT), with 929 learners and 2,325 enrolments. At the time of the inspection, 679 learners were enrolled on 74 courses. A wide range of accredited and non-accredited courses is offered. General ICT courses are offered at level 1, 2 and 3. Specialist graphics and desk top publishing courses are offered at level 2 and 3. Most courses are 10 or 12 weeks long, involving from three to six hours each week. Most of them take place in the main college building, with some in other centres. All provision is directly managed from the college. There are five full-time and one part-time members of staff, and seven sessional tutors.

#### Health, social care & public services

4. The college provides a small range of courses in counselling. At the time of inspection there were 100 learners on level 2 counselling courses, taking either the certificate in counselling skills or the certificate in counselling concepts. Courses are offered as day or evening classes, over 26 weeks. There are also two weekend workshops. In addition, the college offers the certificate for teaching assistants, which currently has six learners who attend for one day each week for 25 weeks. Learners have work placements in schools. Courses have been operating in their present format, including a new awarding body, since September 2003. The curriculum is managed by one full-time programme manager and three lead tutors.

### **Visual & performing arts & media**

5. A range of courses is offered in visual and performing arts and media which includes drawing and painting, graphic design, sculpture, three-dimensional design, textiles, ceramics, mosaics, music and dance. Courses are provided at beginner to advanced levels and learners are able to study for external and WMC's internal accreditation under the college's dual system of accreditation. All classes are located at the college premises in Camden except for music technology, which uses facilities in Camden City Learning Centre. Part-time courses for adults are available and a few include the opportunity to gain qualifications at level 1 to 3. Full-time and part-time access to higher education courses is also available. WMC offers 52 courses, lasting from 10 to 36 weeks. Currently, 742 part-time and 23 full-time students are enrolled on these courses. The curriculum is developed and managed by a full-time programme manager and a deputy programme manager. Four lead tutors manage teams of tutors in specific programme areas. One of these is employed full time. All other tutors are employed on a part-time, fractional or sessional basis.

### **English, languages & communications**

6. At the time of inspection 273 learners were enrolled on languages courses. Twenty-one language courses were operating in French, Italian, Spanish and Arabic, from beginner to advanced level. Language classes last for 12 weeks, for two to three hours each week. Portuguese, Bengali and Hindi classes were offered at the beginning of the academic year 2003-04, but failed to recruit in term three, and were not operating at the time of inspection. There were two GCSE English groups. Creative writing was offered at level 1 and 2. An introductory course in journalism at stage 2 was also provided. Ninety-seven learners were enrolled on these courses at the time of inspection. All learners are part-time. Most courses are held in the evening. A small minority of classes are offered during the day or on Saturdays. All courses are held on the main college site. External accreditation is possible in all modern foreign languages, although many learners opt for internal college certification. Nine tutors are employed on a part-time basis in languages; one of these also acts a languages co-ordinator. Two part-time tutors are employed to teach English, creative writing and journalism.

### **Foundation programmes**

7. In 2002-03, the college provided 344 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, 35 literacy courses and 20 numeracy courses, at its main site and in 25 community venues. Venues include community centres, a local hospital, a school and a refugee centre. Courses range from entry level to level 2 with most at entry level. They are provided over 12 weeks for between five and 10 hours each week. Most of the courses take place during the day, with 66 evening courses and two weekend courses. At the time of inspection there were 585 learners. Learners may join programmes at any time of the year. The provision has a full-time curriculum manager and a full-time deputy manager, 16 full-time, three part-time and eight sessional teaching staff, with two part-time outreach workers.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	13
Number of inspection days	70
Number of learner interviews	339
Number of staff interviews	122
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	16
Number of partner/external agency interviews	6

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. The overall quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the college's leadership and management are good. Its approach to equality of opportunity is outstanding, and its arrangements for quality assurance are good. Provision is good in ICT, health, social care and public services, visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes.

## GRADES

*grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak*

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	1
Quality assurance	2

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

<b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

English, languages & communications	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

9. Achievement is good in all areas of learning, and most learners achieve their personal goals. They acquire good skills in spoken and written English, and modern foreign languages and develop good occupational skills in computing. Standards of craftsmanship are very good in visual and performing arts and media. Learners develop very good skills in counselling. They also develop additional personal skills in literacy, ESOL and numeracy, such as increased confidence, enabling them to progress to further courses.

10. Retention is at least satisfactory in all areas. Some ICT courses have particularly good retention rates. Retention and pass rates are also very good on full-time access to higher education courses in graphics and media. Punctuality is poor for ICT courses.

### Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	0	3	8	9	2	0	0	22
Health, social care & public services	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
Visual & performing arts & media	2	7	7	6	2	0	0	24
English, languages & communications	1	6	4	5	1	0	0	17
Foundation programmes	1	8	6	11	1	0	0	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>95</b>

11. Teaching and learning are both good in all areas of learning. Staff are well qualified and experienced, and most use a wide range of teaching methods and activities to engage and stimulate learners. Teaching resources are good in all areas, and tutors have access to a wide range of teaching aids and materials. However, some of the college accommodation is unsatisfactory for learning. Learners in ICT, modern foreign languages, visual and performing arts and media, and English often work in rooms with



poor ventilation, or intrusive external noise

12. Tutors in modern foreign languages, English and counselling give good practical guidance to learners. Particularly good support is provided for the wider personal needs of learners through the centre for student affairs. However, in some of the modern foreign languages, English, and counselling sessions, there is insufficient attention to the individual needs of learners. Most areas have good progression routes and many learners move to higher level courses, or to study another subject. However, there is no level 1 **teaching assistants course**, and some learners were recruited inappropriately to level 2 courses.

13. The informal monitoring of learners' progress is good, but learners on non-accredited programmes in ICT, ESOL, and visual and performing arts are not formally monitored enough.

14. WMC has a satisfactory system of support for the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills.

15. Some assessment practices are inadequate in ICT. WMC does not provide sufficient written feedback about learners' progress, and targets for improvement are often unclear. Many learners have no ongoing records of their progress. Assessment practices on non-accredited courses in visual and performing arts and media are poor. Teachers do not always set clear assessment goals and targets.

### **Leadership and management**

16. WMC has used strong leadership to promote organisational changes, coupled with good local management of change within the programme areas. Enrolments have grown continuously over time and the college has a good financial rating. Good partnerships effectively widen participation. Through close links with many community groups, the college provides good, local classes in 25 community locations around Camden.

17. The promotion of equality of opportunity and celebration of diversity throughout the college is outstanding. Codes of behaviour are made clear and WMC has a secure and welcoming environment for all learners. Strong support is given to part-time learners, including those in local community venues. The awareness and sensitive promotion of equal opportunities within the curriculum in counselling and ESOL is particularly good.

18. WMC has good arrangements for quality assurance. It has a good quality assurance framework and frequent progress reviews of the quality improvement plan. Clear and challenging targets are set at all levels in the college. Teaching and learning have continuously and effectively improved since the previous inspection. There are particularly good learner feedback systems to monitor improvement. Procedures for the observation of teaching are well documented, with detailed monitoring of results in all areas. All staff have access to, and are involved with, an appropriate range of staff development. Appraisals effectively identify staff development needs and set appropriate targets. Some quality assurance procedures are not yet fully implemented by all staff in

## WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

the college.

19. The college's self-assessment process is well developed and thorough. Staff contribute fully to the regular reviews and development of the plan. Curriculum areas agree clear targets for improvement, involving well-defined aspects of teaching and learning. The self-assessment matched most of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. Generally, the college gave higher grades for the observation of teaching and lower grades for other aspects of the provision, than the inspection team.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Strengths**

- strong leadership to promote organisational changes
- good partnerships to widen participation
- very wide range of effective equality of opportunity and diversity measures
- continuous improvement of teaching and learning

#### **Weaknesses**

- some inadequate resources
- incomplete implementation of some quality assurance procedures

### **Information & communications technology**

#### **Strengths**

- good development of practical occupational skills
- good teaching and learning resources
- good progression routes
- good retention and achievement rates for one group of externally accredited programmes

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor punctuality in many learning sessions
- inadequate assessment practices in some areas
- some unsuitable accommodation

## **Health, social care & public services**

### **Strengths**

- good development of skills in counselling
- good teaching
- good promotion of equality of opportunity in curriculum
- very effective personal support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- no level 1 provision
- insufficient planned attention to the individual needs of learners

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

### **Strengths**

- very well-developed craft skills and techniques
- very good retention and pass rates on full-time access to higher education course
- good individual advice and guidance during lessons
- strong leadership of the curriculum

### **Weaknesses**

- poor accommodation for visual arts
- poor assessment practice in non-accredited provision

## **English, languages & communications**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement in languages
- much good teaching
- good attainment and progression in English and languages

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient attention to the individual needs of learners in some classes

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good development of skills
- very successful measures to widen participation
- good personal support for learners
- strong leadership and management of curriculum

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient attention to individual needs of some learners
- inconsistent monitoring of learners' progress

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE:**

- the opportunity to learn - 'a chance for people who have no voice'
- the integrity and commitment of staff - 'they have given themselves to it'
- the very friendly atmosphere - 'everyone is included and made welcome'
- being able to learn close to home in a familiar place
- the individual help and guidance given by staff - 'staff go the extra mile'; 'they take great good care of us'
- the rich diversity of learners working together - 'like a beehive'
- the enjoyable learning experience - 'never bored in class', 'time flies when we are here'
- the patience and friendliness of staff - 'they take time outside class to help us'
- the very good quality of teaching - 'very clear instructions and detailed notes'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE COULD IMPROVE:**

- the resources - 'more access to computers in self-study'; 'more storage for materials'
- the accommodation - 'a larger library'; 'the layout of the college'

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE:**

- continue to develop strong community and employer links
- improve the proportion of good, or better lessons
- develop the accommodation to meet the needs of learners
- effectively establish quality assurance systems
- improve and refine the quality of data
- develop assessment practices on non-accredited programmes

## Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

Terminology varies across the range of education and training settings covered by the *Common Inspection Framework*. The table below indicates the terms appropriate to Adult and Community Learning

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Provider</b>	Any organisation providing opportunities for adults to meet personal or collective goals through the experience of learning. Providers include local authorities, specialist designated institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, regeneration partnerships and further education colleges
<b>Learner</b>	<b>Learner</b>	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
<b>Teacher / trainer</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	<b>Mentor</b>	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
<b>Learning goals</b>	<b>Main learning goals</b>	Intended gains in skills, knowledge or understanding. Gains may be reflected in the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications. Or they may be reflected in the ability of learners to apply learning in contexts outside the learning situation, e.g. in the family, community, or workplace. Learners' main goal/s should be recorded on an individual or, in some cases, group learning plan. Plans should be revised as progress is made and new goals emerge.
	<b>Secondary learning goals</b>	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	These include being able to study independently, willingness to collaborate with others, and readiness to take up another opportunity for education or training.

## Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
<b>Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome</b>	Adults often experience unanticipated gains as a result of being involved in learning. These include improved self-esteem, greater self-confidence and a growing sense of belonging to a community. Gains of this kind should be acknowledged and recorded in any record of achievement.
<b>Subject-based programme</b>	A programme organised around a body of knowledge, e.g. the structure and usage of the French language or ceramic glazing techniques. Students could be expected to progress from one aspect of the subject to another, to grasp increasingly complex concepts or analyses or to develop greater levels of skill or to apply skills to a new area of work.
<b>Issue-based programme</b>	A programme that is based on the concerns, interests and aspirations of particular groups, for example members of a Sikh Gurdwara wanting to address inter-faith relations in their town, or parents worried about the incidence of drug abuse in their locality. Issue-based learning tends to be associated with geographically defined communities, but the increasing use of electronic means of communication means that this need no longer be the case. Progress is defined in terms of the group's increasing ability to analyse its situation, to access new information and skills which will help it resolve its difficulties and generate solutions and its growing confidence in dealing with others to implement those solutions.
<b>Outreach provision</b>	Provision established in a community setting in addition to provision made at an organisation's main site(s). Outreach programmes may be similar to courses at the main site(s) or be designed to meet the specific requirements of that community.
<b>Neighbourhood-based work</b>	The provider's staff have a long-term presence in a local community with a specific remit to understand the concerns of the local residents and develop learning activities to meet local needs and interests.
<b>Community regeneration</b>	The process of improving the quality of life in communities by investing in their infrastructure and facilities, creating opportunities for training and employment and tackling poor health and educational under-achievement. Community regeneration requires the active participation of local residents in decision-making. Changes and improvements are often achieved either directly or indirectly as a result of the adult learning activities which arise from this.



Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
<b>Community capacity building</b>	The process of enabling local people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take advantage of opportunities for employment, training and further education and to become selfmanaging, sustainable communities.
<b>Active citizenship</b>	The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make a conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship.

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- strong leadership to promote organisational changes
- good partnerships to widen participation
- very wide range of effective equality of opportunity and diversity measures
- continuous improvement of teaching and learning

#### Weaknesses

- some inadequate resources
- incomplete implementation of some quality assurance procedures

20. Managers and governors provide strong leadership to promote organisational changes. A clear strategic direction reflects the college's renewed mission to provide a second chance for learners. The college has prioritised the need to develop a college culture that meets the needs of learners, staff and the wider community. A well-managed process of restructuring and recruitment has been carried out effectively to clarify the roles of staff. Clear lines of responsibility and delegation have been established. The range and structure of courses has been developed to meet the needs of local adults more effectively. From a position of declining learner numbers in 1999, the college has in recent years successfully increased enrolments. This increase has been well managed. College-wide retention, achievement and progression rates show an improving trend. The achievement of relevant strategic aims has successfully improved the quality of learners' experience. Management of the curriculum is at least satisfactory. Effective financial monitoring is carried out to ensure the appropriate spending of funds.

21. In response to the changing needs of adult and community learning in Camden, the college has forged good partnerships to widen participation. Close links have been developed within the education, voluntary and community sectors. Twenty-five local learning centres have been established with partners. These are well used and provide good learning opportunities for targeted and under-represented groups. Progression routes have been established to help learners transfer from learning centres to other college courses. Partnership arrangements have been successful in identifying and securing new sources of external funding to benefit a range of learners. Good working relationships between partner organisations allow them to identify priorities for action. However, the college recognises that its involvement with local employers is limited and has now begun to establish wider employer links.

22. Internal communications are good. A detailed written communication strategy and a clear schedule of formal meetings are supplemented by effective informal methods.

WMC has a well-established meetings' structure, and minutes of meetings are circulated to all staff. Part-time members of staff are paid to attend meetings. Alternative meetings are routinely arranged as required. Managers are easily accessible and respond quickly when necessary. Senior managers offer regular 'drop-in surgeries' to staff and learners. Information is available in a range of community languages. Staff and learners feel well informed about relevant matters, and staff and learner feedback is used effectively to support planning. Although governors have begun to use the college's strategy days to discuss specific details with staff and students, this process is not fully established.

23. Staff development and appraisals are satisfactory. Staff are able to carry out a range of development activities. Appraisals are effective in identifying staff development needs and setting appropriate targets, but not all staff receive appraisal at the time agreed in the staff appraisal schedule.

24. The management information system is satisfactory. A range of useful reports are produced regularly and used to set detailed targets. Thorough checks ensure the accuracy of the data. Although governors, managers and staff are now confident about the accuracy of data used for monitoring and planning purposes, earlier data were not reliable enough to be used effectively for trend analysis, or for comparative purposes. Systems to monitor and follow-up learners' attendance are satisfactory.

25. The management and co-ordination of support for the development of literacy, numeracy and language skills is satisfactory. Learners routinely have initial assessments of their literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs when they begin their programmes. Support is available for individuals, in classes or as part of a specialist provision. Tutors are able to identify and refer learners who require specific additional support in literacy, language and numeracy. Staff are appropriately qualified for this activity.

26. Although the accommodation strategy has successfully adapted much of the college's Grade II listed building, some of the accommodation is unsatisfactory. In some cases, classrooms have inadequate desk or storage space, poor ventilation, or are too noisy. Some rooms used for visual arts are dirty. The college recognises the limitations of the main site for current use, and detailed plans have been established for future expansion.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 1**

27. The college has established a wide range of very effective measures to promote equality of opportunity, and to celebrate the diversity of its learners. Learners from all backgrounds feel equally valued and respected, and regard the college as a welcoming and secure environment. In particular, the college sets very clear codes of behaviour. Learners are carefully inducted into the college, and made fully aware of their expectations relating to equality of opportunity. Many college documents, including the complaints procedure, are translated into five locally spoken languages which are used by staff during initial assessment and induction. Learners are strongly encouraged to take part in the decision-making bodies of the college. The proportion of learners and staff from minority ethnic groups very closely reflects that of the local community.

## WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

28. The college has a wide range of regularly updated policies and procedures, and a well-established equality of opportunity forum, which has representation at senior management level. These are supported by an equality impact assessment group, which monitors closely the effect of measures taken to ensure equality for all learners. There is a well-documented complaints procedure, with records of all actions taken, and the group follows up issues raised by learners, to ensure they have been dealt with effectively and promptly. Governors also systematically review complaints from learners.

29. Staff value very highly the experience and cultural richness learners bring to the college, and often draw on the wide range of cultural backgrounds and experiences of learners in teaching and learning activities. To support and encourage the sharing of good practice, the college has appointed four equality champions, who work closely with staff across programme areas, for example in the design and development of curriculum materials. Staff are regularly trained and updated in equality of opportunity and diversity, and 157 of 167 staff, including sessional staff, have received training in the past 18 months. Data are used effectively by managers to identify learners' needs, and to review and re-focus the existing curriculum to reflect the diversity and needs of the local community.

30. The college's fee policy for learners encourages disadvantaged learners to take part by offering free courses wherever possible. Currently, 61 per cent of college learners pay no fees, and the college provides additional financial support for learners through its learning support fund.

31. Although the college is in a Grade II listed building, it has carefully adapted its premises to allow access to most rooms for learners with restricted mobility. Further work is planned as part of the accommodation strategy to improve access to prayer rooms for those with restricted mobility.

32. The college provides outstanding support for the personal needs of its learners, most of whom are part time. Through the college's centre for student affairs, all learners, irrespective of the duration of their courses, have equal access to a very wide range of good support services. The centre has employed additional staff and extended its hours in response to the continuous growth in demand for its services.

33. These services include flexible access to experienced and trained counsellors, who provide strong support for all learners. The counsellors regularly access additional services through an extensive network of contacts with specialist agencies. The college provides very good support for those learners with additional needs, such as dyslexia. In-class support is regularly provided for those with specific learning difficulties, for example those learners with hearing impairments are provided with signers. The college also provides special equipment such as keyboards, software, and screen filters to assist those learners with visual impairment. Financial advice, as well as regular careers advice, is provided for all learners, and a system of study buddies is managed by the centre for student affairs, to encourage part-time learners to work together for mutual support.

34. Most learners' support needs are carefully assessed at the beginning of their course. Student affairs staff then work very closely with teaching staff to monitor the effects of the support provided. Feedback from learners is frequently monitored to further improve and extend the services.

35. WMC has very strong initiatives to promote social inclusion and educational opportunities for under-represented groups. The college has set itself a clear and challenging agenda to actively promote social inclusion and to provide new learning opportunities in the community for adults who would otherwise be excluded from education. Through strong initiatives with local partners WMC has dramatically increased the number of local centres for adult learners from four, to 25 within 18 months. It has appointed two outreach workers with very good knowledge of local community groups, languages and cultures to support and develop the centres. These centres now provide wide-ranging classes for disadvantaged learners.

36. The college responds quickly and very effectively to meet local needs. Specialist programmes have been arranged to enable learners to re-enter employment; for example, a group of doctors who are also refugees have successfully completed their training and have re-entered employment. One imaginative new programme provides ESOL programmes for mothers in a local primary school, while their children learn their mother's language at the same time. In another programme, volunteer workers from different ethnic communities are being trained, work with older people, providing healthcare within the local community.

37. The community outreach workers also provide easily accessible information and guidance services within the local centres to support and encourage learners to progress to further educational opportunities, within the college and at other locations.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 2**

38. Quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive. WMC has a well-designed quality assurance framework, with policies and procedures for all key aspects of the learning experience. The quality assurance cycle is clear and well documented, showing reporting and monitoring responsibilities for staff at every level, under the effective leadership of the deputy principal, who has overall responsibility. Service level agreements for support staff include specific objectives which link the quality of their service directly to the effect on learning. An effective cross-college quality and standards committee comprises staff, governors and students. This committee thoroughly reviews self-assessment, course reviews, complaints, and retention and achievement rates. Comprehensive quality assurance manuals are issued to all full and part-time staff, containing all the relevant policies, procedures and paperwork. These are well-used and valued by most staff.

39. WMC's quality of provision is continuously improving in most aspects of teaching and learning. Retention and achievement rates are good. However, the needs of individual learners are not given enough attention in some classes.

## WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

40. The college has a thorough system for observing teaching staff. There have been considerable improvements in teaching and resources. Trained staff observe teachers at least once a year, giving detailed and constructive feedback about their performance, although sometimes the grades given are too high. The college recognises this fact. Teachers receive good coaching and support to develop areas of weakness and are then re-observed if appropriate.

41. Course files are audited regularly. Compliance with quality assurance requirements is improving. Team targets for retention and achievement of learners are regularly monitored. Curriculum teams carry out detailed annual course reviews, using a wide range of information from college data and learners' feedback. The reviews form the basis of the curriculum self-assessment reports, which are subject to careful moderation processes. Strengths and weaknesses, priorities for action and relevant data are used to produce the quality development plan. The plan is carefully monitored. The college's self-assessment process is inclusive, thorough and self-critical; although broadly accurate, the report underestimated the effect of strengths when arriving at the overall grades.

42. Systems for gaining learners' feedback are particularly good. A wide range of methods is used to collect student views, including individual interviews, group discussions and satisfaction questionnaires. The principal holds a monthly open-door clinic for students to raise issues. There is an effective student advocate to assist students who need representation. The responsiveness of the college to learners' feedback is particularly prompt, and effective in improving the provision. Good feedback is given by tutors to learning support staff about the effectiveness of learning support on student achievements. Feedback is analysed and used well by tutors and managers to improve course planning and teaching.

43. Internal verification is satisfactory for externally accredited courses and the college meets the requirements of awarding bodies adequately. The cross-college lead verifier monitors the work of the other verifiers effectively through sampling, standardisation meetings, and feedback from students. Feedback to assessors by verifiers is detailed and thorough. Prompt action is taken to correct any action points raised by external verifiers. The college has recently piloted an internal verification system for non-accredited courses, which is now being implemented throughout the college.

44. Some quality assurance procedures are not fully established in all aspects of teaching and learning. Not all tutors are applying procedures consistently, and there are variations in the quality of individual learning plans, and progress reviews in some areas. Some assessment practices are weak on some courses. Although teaching is good in all areas, some teachers do not plan all lessons to take sufficient account of individual learning needs. Some minutes of meetings are not always well recorded and do not contain sufficiently clear action points. These inconsistencies have been identified through the college's quality assurance systems and are being remedied.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Information & communications technology

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	679	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good development of practical occupational skills
- good teaching and learning resources
- good progression routes
- good retention and achievement rates for one group of externally accredited programmes

#### Weaknesses

- poor punctuality in many learning sessions
- inadequate assessment practices in some areas
- some unsuitable accommodation

#### Achievement and standards

45. The development of learners' practical computing skills is particularly effective. They acquire good basic computing skills in word-processing, spreadsheets, internet use and e-mail. Importantly, they gain the personal confidence to move into other aspects of computing, and to progress to higher-level courses. Learners gain office computing skills such as the use of databases, and accounts programmes, which help some of them to find jobs. A number of learners also gain specialist computing skills in graphic design, art and architecture.

46. Retention and achievement rates are good on many externally accredited programmes. All the 700 learners registered with one awarding body completed their course and achieved their qualifications in 2002-03. Good retention rates of 91 per cent were achieved on programmes leading to the European computer driving licence (ECDL) in 2002-03. Current retention rates, in the first term of 2003-04, are 98 per cent.

#### Quality of education and training

47. Teaching and learning resources are good. The purpose-built information technology (IT) suites are equipped with modern personal computers which are well maintained by dedicated technicians. Up-to-date software allows learners to perform a wide range of tasks appropriate to their courses. Most rooms have interactive

## WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

whiteboards which are used frequently by most tutors. In some cases, however, the screen or the computer operating the projector are poorly positioned. All computers are connected to a stable network which enables learners to access their work easily from the intranet site or the internet. Special resources are available for learners with disabilities, such as tracker balls for those with limited fine motor control. Some personal computers are equipped with magnifying software for learners with visual impairments. Learners have access to more computers in the library.

48. Progression routes are good. Learners are aware of them and use them to access higher training levels, as well as to increase their breadth of knowledge. For example some learners advanced through three levels in word-processing, spreadsheets, and the ECDL. Many learners successfully progress from introductory computer skills to more advanced programmes. There are also clear progression routes for learners developing skills in graphics. Many of these courses have been developed in response to feedback from learners. However, there are not enough higher level courses to meet the current demands in desktop publishing and web-page design.

49. Teaching is satisfactory, with knowledgeable, well-qualified and technically competent tutors. Sessions are generally well prepared, although some sessions are not always planned sufficiently to meet the needs of individual learners. Tutors give good individual guidance and provide encouraging verbal feedback; they give clear demonstrations using the interactive whiteboards and comprehensive course packs with very detailed handouts. These are valued by learners. In the weaker sessions, the variety of teaching methods is limited.

50. The support system for learners with additional learning needs in literacy, numeracy and language is satisfactory. Tutors are able to refer learners for additional support through the centre for student affairs, and helpful, additional study skills classes are also available.

51. Some of the accommodation is unsuitable. Some rooms are too small for the number of learners, and there is insufficient individual desk space for learners. Overcrowded classrooms quickly become overheated and stuffy, and opening windows and doors introduces excessive traffic noise, making it difficult for learners to hear and follow tutor demonstrations.

52. Many learning sessions have a problem with poor punctuality by learners. In some lessons observed, learners arrived 45 minutes without prior notification, or any explanation for their lateness. Lessons are disrupted by these arrivals. The college has recognised this weakness in its self-assessment report, and has put additional measures in place to improve the situation.

53. Some assessment practices are unsatisfactory. Although most initial assessment is satisfactory, there is generally not enough written feedback about learners' progress. Individual targets for improvement are often unclear. Many learners have no ongoing record of their progress, although learners on some programmes keep a diary of progress and feedback. The moderation of most of the assessed work is carried out satisfactorily.



## **Leadership and management**

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Tutors are observed and appraised regularly, and extensive training is offered to extend and improve tutors' skill base and technical expertise. Staff share good practice. For example, one tutor has written a series of computer-based quizzes which other tutors are using to help to consolidate learning. Good working relationships with the IT network administrators ensure that any updates to the system are planned well in advance, giving tutors sufficient time to update lesson materials. There are regular staff meetings, and minutes are kept and circulated to all staff.

55. WMC has specialised equipment for learners with additional needs, but there are no dedicated adjustable workstations. All staff have received training in equality of opportunity, which is discussed regularly at staff meetings. In one learning session observed, the college's equality of opportunity policy was used as the basis for a word-processing activity.

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	100	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good development of skills in counselling
- good teaching
- good promotion of equality of opportunity in curriculum
- very effective personal support for learners

**Weaknesses**

- no level 1 provision
- insufficient planned attention to the individual needs of learners

**Achievement and standards**

56. Learners on counselling courses develop good individual skills. These are firmly in place early in the courses and enable learners to carry out challenging practice sessions with confidence. Learners consolidate their skills, and work with sensitivity and a clear understanding of professional ethics. Their observational and feedback skills are developed to a very good standard and they are able to transfer their skills to work and voluntary settings.

57. Where learners are engaged in group work they work effectively and collaboratively, assigning tasks and responsibilities. Portfolios and learning journals are of an appropriate standard, with sound self-reflection on counselling practice. Pass rates for the most recent counselling courses, which have replaced the previous provision, are good at 71 per cent. The retention is high, ranging from 78 to 100 per cent since 2002. The most recent pass rate in the certificate for teaching assistants was 83 per cent, with 92 per cent retention.

**Quality of education and training**

58. Teaching and learning are of a good standard. Lessons are characterised by careful planning, effective classroom management techniques and the development of supportive relationships which promote learning. In the best classes tutors model the skills associated with the occupational setting. Learners develop good work habits, using their time productively. They work with concentration and focus. Tasks are well-designed, to ensure that they are able to integrate theory and practice, which engages learners' interest. For example, on the teaching assistants' course, learners report how

they have applied their learning in their work placements since the previous week. They thoroughly evaluate their own effectiveness. Learners are able to clearly identify the progress they have made towards their learning goals using individual learning plans.

59. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted in the curriculum. Staff value diversity and draw upon it to enhance learning. For example in a counselling concepts lesson, learners worked in pairs, choosing someone culturally different from them. Each then described significant aspects of his, or her culture to the other. They then worked with another pair and successfully analysed how cultural factors might affect a counselling situation. The selection of materials, topics for presentation and specific assignments draws upon a wide range of cultural aspects. Reading lists also reflect this, for example, the recommendation of books on counselling in multicultural settings. There is a shared ethos, and explicit aims and strategies to promote equality in the curriculum.

60. WMC's personal support for learners is very effective. Initial assessments take place discretely, as part of the induction activities. During induction, learners are guided effectively in deciding whether their chosen courses are appropriate. Effective individual tutorials are provided for all courses, including the short courses with limited hours of attendance. Extra subject coaching and guidance is available on request, particularly for support in assignments. Learners value the way staff give freely of their time. Helpful additional study skills classes are provided for learners on the counselling courses. Specialist equipment and assistance are used very effectively to support learners with disabilities. Staff are knowledgeable about internal student support systems and external agencies. Those learners interviewed appreciate the broad range of support available, and its contribution to their good progress in learning. The guidance and support offered are particularly sensitive in taking account of equal opportunities. Staff also provide clear and helpful guidance about progression and employment opportunities.

61. Staff are appropriately qualified with relevant, recent occupational experience. They draw effectively on their contacts with local communities. Opportunities for professional development are satisfactory. Accommodation is generally fit for purpose although traffic noise is intrusive in many rooms. Library resources are satisfactory, except that there are not enough periodicals to support creative writing.

62. Assessment and verification procedures are sound and in line with the requirements of the awarding bodies. Action is taken on external verifiers' recommendations. The systems used to monitor learners' progress are satisfactory. Learners receive useful written feedback from assignments, and are involved in detailed discussions about their work. Peer evaluation is also used to good effect. This helps learners to have a better understanding of assessment criteria, and also promotes self-confidence. The timetabling of courses has been changed to accommodate learners with family responsibilities, and the college recruits well from under-represented groups. For example, 50 per cent of learners taking the teaching assistant's certificate course are men.

63. The college offers no level 1 provision for teaching assistants. **Changes in** awarding bodies early in the academic year resulted in the recruitment of **some** students to inappropriate, level 2 courses. This affected on-course retention in the

## WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

early stages. The college recognises this weakness in the self-assessment report and is exploring a range of possible options.

64. Some classes are not planned sufficiently to meet individual's learning needs. Although staff are usually well aware of specific needs, such as those of learners with disabilities, or dyslexia, this awareness is not always reflected in session planning. There are no plans to use modified handouts or materials which could extend the more confident learners. Some materials are less accessible and have densely packed text which could prove an obstacle for learners who have only recently returned to study.

### **Leadership and management**

65. The leadership and management of these programmes are satisfactory, with some good elements. The promotion of equal opportunities is strong and learners have a very good understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity. The issue of level 1 programmes has been rectified, and courses have been developed to meet the needs of the local community and employers more effectively. There has been a significant increase in the number of students enrolled for counselling courses.

66. WMC has clearly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Observations of teaching and learning are carried out regularly, which staff find useful. Learners have good access to support in literacy, language and numeracy. Regular meetings are clearly documented and departmental development day includes work for the self-assessment report. Lines of communication are clear and staff understand targets for recruitment, retention and achievement. They also understand the direction and vision for the college.

67. The good practice of the individual course teams is not shared. Assembling the full course team for meetings is not always possible. Sessional staff are not always able to attend meetings. Sessional staff are appraised on an informal and unrecorded basis.

68. Course teams contribute to the self-assessment report, drawing upon the course review and evaluation system and the student evaluation forms. The self-assessment report is accurate about many aspects of provision, but does not give sufficient weighting to some forms of learners' achievement, such as skill development in counselling.

**Visual & performing arts & media****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	765	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- very well-developed craft skills and techniques
- very good retention and pass rates on full-time access to higher education course
- good individual advice and guidance during lessons
- strong leadership of the curriculum

**Weaknesses**

- poor accommodation for visual arts
- poor assessment practice in non-accredited provision

**Achievement and standards**

69. Learners demonstrate very good standards of traditional and contemporary technical skills in their work. There are excellent standards in paint techniques and outstanding work in graphic design. Learners create expressive, confident work including paintings, photography and prints. Sequential ideas are particularly well developed and fully explored in sketchbooks on the access course. Some photography work shows innovative experimental use of lighting and colour. Progression into higher education is extremely good for learners who complete access courses. Since the start of the access programme in 2001, retention and pass rates have been very good. In the academic year 2001-02 retention rates were 70 per cent and achievement of targets was 80 per cent. In 2002-03 retention and achievement rates were 75 per cent and 100 per cent, respectively. In the current year, 19 of the 22 learners enrolled are still on the programme. A few examples of learners' work show poor composition and weak use of colour.

**Quality of education and training**

70. Sixty-seven per cent of teaching is good, or better. Some teachers in visual arts give learners perceptive and critical individual guidance in a sensitive and encouraging way. Learners are clear about how to continue to explore and experiment with their work. The teaching of techniques and skills is particularly effective. Teachers use imaginative ways of imparting knowledge and techniques within their subjects. For example, one teacher, instead of demonstrating a new technique herself, asked learners to volunteer to follow her explicit instructions about applying tile cleaner to their work. Despite the potential to damage weeks of good work in producing a successful piece, the learners

## WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

did as she asked and realised that it was relatively straightforward. All the learners gained confidence and learnt the technique effectively for themselves.

71. Resources are satisfactory; the equipment for music technology is good. Learners have adequate access to specialist computers for graphic design. Appropriate emphasis is placed on using traditional approaches to graphics work and learners are able to save work on the intranet. However, where students need to save large files of graphic images on CD-ROMs they are not able to do so. Accommodation is poor for visual arts. Rooms are well lit, but are in a poor state of repair, and the furniture is worn. Some rooms are cramped and too small for the number of learners and the course activities. There are enough easels and drawing boards for visual studies classes, but many of these are damaged and dirty. Rooms are poorly organised with cluttered sink areas and inadequate storage. In one room used for ceramics and mosaics work, there is inadequate ventilation. Rooms do not have inspirational displays of learners' work.

72. Assessment process for learners on the access to higher education course use suitable criteria and effectively evaluate learners' skills and abilities. Teachers' written comments are very critical and give learners very good feedback about standards and approaches to creative development. Assessment practices on non-accredited courses are poor. Teachers do not always set clear assessment goals and targets for learners. Individual goals are not always set and some criteria are not specific enough. On many of these courses learners do not receive sufficient feedback to help improve their work. Many learners stay on the same, or similar course levels and do not make progress.

73. Visual and performing arts and media offers a wide range of different activities. This includes good provision for painting, life drawing, visual communications, ceramics and the more unusual activities such as framing and gilding, mural, fresco and icon painting. Performing arts include Egyptian, flamenco and contemporary dance in addition to singing, jazz and instrumental tuition. Recent learners have successfully completed the access course and progressed to higher education courses. However, the range provided by the access course is currently too restricted. The inclusion of other disciplines is planned. Some learners have not progressed satisfactorily to higher levels, for example, some have repeated courses three times or more at the same level.

74. Learners who apply to join the access to higher education courses are given a thorough, holistic interview with the course leaders. Any support needs they may have are discussed at this point. Learners have valuable, flexible options to attend the college for personal study or tutorials. Those whose work or personal commitments prevent them from attending the access course on a full-time basis attend part-time for an appropriate period. Learners have satisfactory access to personal advice and guidance that is well promoted by WMC.

75. A satisfactory system of support is provided for learners with additional learning needs in literacy, numeracy and language. Tutors are able to refer learners for additional support through the centre for student affairs, and helpful study skills classes are available. At the beginning of courses, staff from the centre for student affairs visit the classrooms to introduce the support facilities that are available. This information is

adequately reinforced by a learners' information pack. However, some learners with language support needs are not always identified and supported. For example, a few learners were not able to understand the teacher's instructions during one lesson.

76. In less effective lessons, teachers are too vague when helping students to improve their work. In some visual studies lessons teachers do not pay sufficient attention to the evaluation of aesthetic principles. Learners' understanding is not checked sufficiently and closed questioning is used too much to make sure learners know what to do next.

### **Leadership and management**

77. Managers provide clear strategic direction and strong leadership in this curriculum area, and manage it well to improve standards and raise achievements. The access to higher education course has been successfully introduced, with both full-time and part-time routes. Learners on non-accredited courses have good opportunities to progress. Learners who previously have not progressed beyond this level successfully achieve places at universities to take graduate and post-graduate qualifications. Self-assessment fully involves teachers and is realistic and thorough. Equality of opportunity is promoted well; projects investigate diversity in the arts.

78. Managers have introduced greater individual staff accountability, with new systems for monitoring aspects of the provision. Schemes of work and lesson plans have improved. Internal verification for accredited provision is satisfactory and a pilot scheme has been introduced to check the assessment of targets on individual learning plans. Lead tutors and some teachers are using this new paperwork effectively, but too many teachers do not fully understand the purpose of the paperwork and do not complete the forms effectively.

**English, languages & communications****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	273	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good achievement in languages
- much good teaching
- good attainment and progression in English and languages

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient attention to the individual needs of learners in some classes

**Achievement and standards**

79. Achievements are good in foreign language courses. An option is offered to learners, in which they all follow an examination course, but are able to opt out of examinations if they prefer. A wide range of learners' personal learning goals are consistently achieved, or exceeded. For example, personal goals range from understanding Spanish work colleagues and coping with French building contractors, to appreciating the lyrics of songs in another language, in addition to completing class work successfully.

80. Written work is of a high standard, and is often imaginative and lively at all levels. On creative writing and journalism courses, learners often become active writers and read more widely and critically. In some cases, they have attempted to write in genres new to them, such as poetry. Several learners are working towards publication. In language classes, learners display good abilities in understanding spoken and written language and communications clearly and confidently with their tutors and other learners.

81. Learners progress well in languages. Levels are clearly defined and many learners progress through them from one term to another and from year to year. Some also progress to learning another language. During the inspection, attendance was 76 per cent in the classes observed, and the retention rate this year is satisfactory, at 87 per cent.

**Quality of education and training**

82. A high proportion of teaching is good, or very good. Most lessons are well-planned with a good variety of activities to encourage learners' motivation, interest and active participation by catering for different needs and learning styles. Most foreign language classes are conducted almost entirely in the subject language. All tutors are native



speakers, and most are able to adapt their level of language appropriately. Learners have acquired good accents and intonation. Learners support each other well both in and outside the classroom and enjoy learning together. In the best lessons there is some inspiring teaching and skilled management of the learning environment. For example in one mixed ability language class, pair work, group and whole-class discussions were used effectively to ensure that each learner took a very active part in the learning process. Although most teachers have good knowledge of individual learning needs, in some weaker lessons there is not enough planning to meet these needs. Some foreign language tutors do not prepare enough individual tasks, and the more able learners are not challenged sufficiently.

83. Resources are satisfactory. All tutors are suitably qualified and experienced. Most lessons are held in bright, clean, carpeted rooms, but there are no foreign language displays. One room is small for the number of learners, and in another there is only a very small whiteboard. A few rooms have poor ventilation and suffer from external noise from traffic and neighbouring classrooms. Language teaching resources are generally sufficient. Although language CD-ROMs are available, some classes have limited access to ICT. This weakness was identified in the college self-assessment report. No teaching sessions observed during inspection involved the use of ICT.

84. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. All students negotiate an individual learning plan with their tutor at the beginning of the course; this includes their starting level in relation to the course learning outcomes and any individual goals identified by the learner. A satisfactory system supports learners with additional learning needs in literacy, numeracy and language. Tutors are able to refer learners for additional support through the centre for student affairs, and helpful, additional study skills classes are available for learners.

85. Assessment takes place regularly in class and is recorded on the individual learning plan by most tutors. Learners' progress towards course accreditation is also monitored and recorded satisfactorily to meet the requirements of the awarding body. Internal verification procedures are satisfactory. Homework is set regularly, marked and returned promptly to students. Tutors also provide regular verbal and written feedback to learners about their progress and how they can improve. However, the quality of feedback varies, and in some of the learners' work, not all mistakes are clarified effectively by the tutor.

86. The range of provision is satisfactory. Classes are in four main languages. A pre-GCSE level has been added to resolve retention problems in GCSE English courses. There is no level 3 in creative writing for learners. Progression routes are well designed in language courses, and many learners make good use of them. Learners speak positively about the flexibility of the examination option; some welcome the opportunity to study without the pressure to prepare for an examination and others find it more satisfactory and valuable to be able to gain a qualification.

87. Course information is clear and easily available. Pre-enrolment specialist advice and assessments are regularly available for learners in the main languages. A clear induction

## WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

checklist is completed during the first session of each term, and learners report that they are well informed about the additional support available to them. Learners feel well supported by their tutors, both during lessons and outside the classroom. Many tutors spend time with learners at the end of their sessions to discuss individual issues. Specialist equipment is available for learners with disabilities. For example, some tutors work with individual students on IT zoom screens and provide them with taped handouts. Tutors in creative writing and journalism provide useful advice about career progression.

### **Leadership and management**

88. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A lead tutor has responsibility for the overall curriculum, with the support of a member of senior management. Tutors feel well supported, and information is shared and circulated effectively to all staff. Regular, minuted team meetings take place, and sessional staff are paid to attend. The lead tutor also has weekly discussions with individual tutors. English and creative writing tutors have regular meetings with their line manager. Good practice is shared at the team meetings, and often takes the form of an exchange of materials or ideas. Although there is little formal peer observation, some tutors attend language courses taught by their colleagues.

89. Tutors have clear responsibility for the review and the evaluation of their own courses, and routinely identify areas for improvement, and their personal development needs. Tutors also contribute systematically to the area self-assessment report. The self-assessment report is largely accurate, but insufficient weight has been given to students' personal achievements in creative writing and journalism. Most tutors have been observed within the past 12 months, but the observation of new tutors is not adequately prioritised. The promotion of equal opportunities is strong in English, and staff value the diversity of learners. They draw upon this to enhance learning through the careful selection of materials, extracts, and topics for presentation.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	585	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good development of skills
- very successful measures to widen participation
- good personal support for learners
- strong leadership and management of curriculum

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient attention to individual needs of some learners
- inconsistent monitoring of learners' progress

**Achievement and standards**

90. Learners' skills are well developed in this area. ESOL learners increase their language skills, confidence and self-esteem, and are clearly able to apply their new skills in their everyday lives. Learners generally develop good study skills, are able to assess their own progress effectively, and identify clear learning goals, even at beginner level. Most learners become better communicators and feel more independent in their lives. For example, some ESOL learners state that they no longer need interpreters for hospital appointments, or meetings with school teachers. Women working in the voluntary sector improve their presentation skills. Learners work very effectively together and are keen to support and encourage each other. Most learners are very well-motivated and make good progress in completing set tasks.

**Quality of education and training**

91. WMC has taken very effective steps to widen participation. Learning opportunities have increased significantly, from 137 courses in 2002-03 to 399 in 2003-04, attracting 813 learners in 2002-03, and 1,313 learners in 2003-04. The programmes offered has been thoroughly reviewed, and a wide range of programmes has been developed to meet the needs of the local community. For example, intensive courses for refugees and asylum seekers and discrete courses for men and women have been established, as well as courses for doctors, health service workers and voluntary sector employees. Other programmes successfully combine ESOL with IT and sewing. Well-focused outreach work has substantially increased learning opportunities in community settings from four in 2002-03 to 25 in the current year. The accreditation offered is being carefully reviewed to meet learners' needs and comply with the new national framework.

92. Staff support learners effectively to ensure that they complete their programmes successfully. Teachers frequently support their learners outside their teaching time. All learners receive good advice and guidance. Outreach workers provide valuable support to learners in the local community venues and provide strong and effective links with the main college facilities. For example, workers ensure that all learners have equal access to services such as financial support for using the crèche, transport, and accreditation fees, or counselling. Initial interviews and inductions are thorough and extended to the first learning sessions with tutors. However at the time of inspection, learners on one course were unclear about the accreditation of their programme.

93. Fifty-six per cent of observed teaching sessions were judged to be good, or very good. In the best sessions, learning is well structured with particular attention given to the individual needs of learners. Many teachers use a good range of teaching strategies, monitor learners' progress continuously and give good feedback to learners. They effectively celebrate cultural diversity and encourage learners to work collaboratively.

94. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in their subjects. All staff have attended national core curriculum training. The staff development programme satisfactorily meets the development needs of staff. Accommodation is satisfactory with many venues well sited within the local community. Learning materials and equipment are generally satisfactory. Learners are able to use audiovisual aids, reference materials and readers in the main library, and have good access to readers through the mini-libraries being established in off-site venues.

95. Initial assessments are detailed and accurately identify learners' starting points. However, in the weaker sessions, teachers do not use the outcomes of initial assessments sufficiently to plan sessions which effectively meet learner's individual needs. For example, in some sessions, teachers do not vary activities or materials to enable learners to work at their own pace or level.

96. Although some good practice was observed in the use of individual learning plans to set personal goals and to record learners' progress, many teachers do not always encourage learners to set meaningful goals, or reflect sufficiently on their progress and achievements.

### **Leadership and management**

97. The area is well led and managed. Managers have a clear strategy for the development of this area that complements the overall college strategy to meet the needs of the local community. The well-led organisational change in the past year has raised staff morale. Staff have a good understanding of the area's priorities and targets and fully support the strategy and its implementation. Although many teachers are recent appointments, they work well in teams to promote improvements and ensure students' progress. Operational management is good. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities. Internal communications are good, using consultative, open-door policies, regular e-mails, weekly team meetings and individual supervision and support.

98. The thorough process of internal observation and peer support accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses and contributes to the staff development programme. Individual course reviews and course-team evaluations are well detailed and clearly identify actions for improvement. All staff have been appraised, and thorough action plans agreed and monitored in regular individual meetings. Well-attended and focused weekly meetings provide good opportunities for staff to contribute to developments and to share good practice. The self-assessment report for this area matched most of the strengths and weaknesses found during inspection.