

The Working Men's College

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Information and communications technology
- Visual arts
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

Description of the provider

1. The Working Men's College (WMC) is a designated institution in the further education sector in Camden. It was established in 1854 to provide education for manual workers. WMC provides courses in health and social care, science and mathematics, information and communication technology, arts media and publishing, education and training, preparation for life and work, and business administration and law. Approximately 60% of learners attend English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes. The proportion of learners on non-accredited courses is approximately 43%. Almost all provision is funded from the Central London Learning and Skills Council (LSC). A small amount is subcontracted non-accredited arts provision from the London Borough of Camden.
2. The college has 120 staff, 75 of whom are tutors. Approximately half the tutors are full-time. The senior management consists of the principal, deputy principal, vice principal, assistant directors and the clerk to the governors.
3. In 2006/07 3016 learners, attended WMC. Almost all were adult learners and 67% were female. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to that in Camden.
4. The population of Camden as of 2006 is 227,500. The borough has significant areas of deprivation, particularly in the south. The overall unemployment rate for economically active residents is 8%, higher than the London average. The 2001 census indicates approximately 50% of residents state their faith as Christian, the next largest is Muslim and then Jewish. Approximately 73% of the population are white.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
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Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
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Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
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Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
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Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
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Sector subject areas

Information and communications technology	Good: Grade 2
Visual arts	Good: Grade 2
English for speakers of other languages	Outstanding: Grade 1

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of provision is good. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates are high on all non-accredited or accredited courses. The standards of work are good, as is learners' progress compared with their prior attainment. Learners attain excellent workplace and social skills. Learners' attendance is satisfactory. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good, and classroom support is good. The identification of additional learning needs is good. WMC is outstanding at meeting the needs and interests of learners, matching learning accurately to learners' aspirations. WMC responds effectively to the local community and is highly inclusive. Advice and guidance is good overall. Induction is outstanding on ESOL courses. Learners particularly appreciate the supportive environment of the college. They see WMC as a safe place in which to learn. WMC provides a strong emphasis on learners' personal development.
6. Leadership and management including equality of opportunity are outstanding. WMC effectively monitors performance and leaders at all levels set clear direction. The accuracy of management information is good. The college provides good value for money. Governance is outstanding. Governors play an active role in monitoring the college's performance. The college's skills for life strategy is satisfactory and WMC adequately implements recording and recognising progress and achievement on non-accredited courses.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

7. WMC demonstrates outstanding capacity to make further improvement. Good progress has been made to promote improvement since the previous inspection. Managers have successfully introduced considerable organisational change. They have also initiated significant and positive accommodation changes for the college. Success rates have continued to improve and are good. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is good. College accommodation is now accessible to those with restricted mobility. Leaders and managers have a clear agenda for improvement. The thoroughness and accuracy of the self-assessment process including the report are good. Quality assurance arrangements are generally good. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning (OTL) are well established. The college is in good financial

health and has the confidence of a growing range of partners. Management information is accurate and used well to inform curriculum developments, quality improvement and strategic decisions.

Key strengths

- High success rates
- Outstanding community engagement
- Good teaching and learning
- Particularly effective support from all staff
- Good advice and guidance
- Significant engagement of learners in decision making
- Outstanding promotion of equality of opportunity

Key areas for improvement

- Consistency of the observation of teaching and learning scheme
- Individual learning plans

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

8. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates for non-accredited and accredited courses are high and maintained for several years. Success rates are particularly high on accredited visual arts courses. The college meets LSC minimum performance requirements in relation to qualifications very well. Learners' progress compared with their prior attainment is good and many have no prior qualifications in their chosen subject. Learners from cultural groups with barriers to learning achieve well. Learners develop excellent skills to prepare them for employment, participate in the community or progress to higher qualifications. The standard of learners' work overall is good. Attendance is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is sufficiently critical and accurate. The quality improvement plan emphasises the need to improve success rates further.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

9. The quality of provision is good and the inspection findings broadly match the college's self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good. The college evaluation shows an improvement in good or better teaching and a reduction in inadequate sessions. In the better sessions tutors are well prepared and manage sessions well. They are good at meeting individual learning needs during practical classroom activities. The availability of information learning technology (ILT) has increased significantly since the previous inspection yet in some cases classroom ILT resources are insufficiently used.
10. Assessment is good. Initial assessment is good and the results are appropriately used. Individual learning plans support learning well in ESOL and satisfactorily elsewhere. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection in recording and accrediting achievement on non-accredited courses. In many curriculum areas imaginative approaches have been developed to record attainment. Most learners understand the progress they are making, however, some learners' progress is insufficiently monitored.

11. WMC is outstanding at meeting the needs and interest of learners. The college is highly inclusive. WMC is very successful at engaging learners within small deprived communities locally. Strategies to promote the skills needed to meet learners' employment aspirations or personal development are excellent. The planning of learning to meet the needs of the community is very good. For example, courses which combine learning English with practical vocational skills are highly valued by learners. WMC's commitment and expertise in teaching learners who would not normally participate in education and training adds value to local partner organisations. The college provides a good range of accessible non-accredited and accredited provision. Course cancellations are low. Employers' needs are met well.
12. Initial advice and guidance is good. The student services team works effectively in promoting clear and attractive course information. The college offers a good range of additional learning support (ALS). The take up of ALS has more than doubled in the last three years. ALS assistants work well with tutors in planning and delivering effective support. Success rates for learners receiving ALS show they achieve well. Progression opportunities within WMC and to other centres are good. Visual arts and media students regularly progress to higher education. Learners receive good support to prepare for job applications and interviews.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

13. Leadership and management are outstanding. Since the previous inspection, skilful leadership and accomplished management have continued to raise standards. WMC has established its essential role as a significant contributor to local adult education. During a testing period for adult and community learning WMC has improved the quality of its provision, expertly managed organisational change, expanded and developed its provision, and much improved its accommodation.
14. WMC has a clear vision for developing its service for learners, influenced, understood and shared by learners and staff. The reliability and use of management information is good. Leaders and managers successfully promote the college's well founded strategy and plans directed at meeting the needs and interests of the local community. The college knows its community well. Strategic plans are well informed by local contexts and intelligence. At the same time, WMC understands the wider educational environment in which it works and successfully embraces many

government initiatives to promote learning. Highly effective social inclusion and development of partnerships have continued since the previous inspection.

15. Committed and highly visible senior managers work closely and well with staff to meet the needs and interests of learners. Internal communications are very good. Managers are easily accessible to staff and learners. Formal meetings and informal communications are effective. Learners are included well in many college meetings.
16. Curriculum management is good or better. Provision in ESOL and its management were judged outstanding by inspectors. A single level of curriculum managers was introduced in late 2007. They are focused on college priorities to manage, improve and develop provision and already significantly contribute to the college's further progress. Since the previous inspection, additional senior management appointments have improved the college's capacity to develop quality and build enterprise, partnerships and community engagement.
17. Good and comprehensive quality assurance, noted at the previous inspection, continues to improve. Weaknesses then identified have been successfully resolved. Success rates and teaching and learning have improved and are good. Governors, managers, staff and learners work well together to improve quality. The thoroughness and accuracy of the self-assessment process is good. The inclusive process uses a wide range of evidence to help shape judgements. Inspectors agreed with most judgements and grades in the report. The college's scheme for OTL is thorough and well managed staff development is closely allied to the outcomes of observations. Staff appraisal is effective and up to date.
18. The contribution of governors to the work of the college is outstanding. Their varied experience and expertise, blending local and national contexts, is tremendously valuable. They provide an appropriate mix of challenge and support to senior managers. Governors' overview of quality and standards is good and their work to strategically review provision is particularly effective. The college is financially strong.
19. Equality of opportunity continues to be outstanding. Learners from all backgrounds feel equally valued and respected, and regard the college as welcoming and safe. They applaud the work of the principal and staff in leading the promotion of equality and diversity. Since the previous inspection, the college has further improved its promotion of equality and diversity. The work of the equality and learner involvement steering group provides an operational focus where stakeholders discuss a wide range of equality and diversity issues. Its work contributes to management and governors' meetings. The analysis of equality and diversity related data and related action planning is particularly thorough. Staff and learner development is comprehensive. The promotion of equality and diversity is successfully established in teaching and learning. A

recent college diversity day was very successful. The college meets its obligations under relevant race and equalities legislation. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. The college's skills for life strategy is satisfactory.

20. Accommodation and resources are much improved. Substantial building work has considerably improved access for learners with restricted mobility. The college now has a modern library and cafeteria. ILT resources are readily available in most areas. Tutors are well qualified and a high proportion have teaching qualifications. The college is on course to meet workforce reform requirements.

What learners like:

- Good teachers who are supportive and give up their own time to help students
- Atmosphere of college
- 'The diversity of age, ethnicity and gender within classes is inspirational'
- 'Getting my exam certificate was the best day of my life'
- Structured teaching, challenging and inspirational
- 'The college is like my home'
- Facilities, especially the computers, library and canteen

What learners think could improve:

- Canteen isn't open late enough to cater for evening students
- More 1–2 day Saturday classes to bridge between disciplines
- 'I don't like paying fees for ESOL'

Sector subject areas

Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

Context

21. Currently, 331 learners attend 21 accredited and non-accredited short and long courses from introductory level to level 3 which are available in the day, evening and on Saturdays. In 2006/07 there were 1041 enrolments. Most courses are accredited. Thirty-two % of learners are men, 57% are from minority ethnic groups and 16% of learners declared a disability. Seven tutors, of whom five are part-time, are responsible to one curriculum manager.

Strengths

- High success rates with excellent retention
- Good teaching and learning
- Particularly effective additional learning support
- Good curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient monitoring of learner progress on individual learning plans

Achievement and standards

22. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates for 2006/07 are high at 80%. For example, success rates for the certificate of IT Users level 1 (CLAIT) was 72% and certificate of IT Users level 2 (European computer driving license) was 80%. Success rates on short entry level courses during this year are very good. Overall retention was excellent last year at 93% and

currently the number of learners retained on short courses or still attending long courses is 98%. Learners progress well. Attendance so far this year is satisfactory. Some poor punctuality still remains, although it has improved since the previous inspection.

23. Development of learners' IT skills and their standard of work is good. Learners with no previous experience of computers, successfully improve their confidence in using ICT by gaining sound word-processing skills and using email. Learners develop confidence in demonstrating to the whole class and responding to questions. In one advanced word processing class learners successfully performed how to simplify repeated tasks by recording macros.

Quality of provision

24. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Sessions include a variety of stimulating learning activities, often starting with useful recap exercises in small groups. For example, in spreadsheet classes learners volunteered to demonstrate how to insert and delete columns; format cells and create borders. Learners demonstrate ICT skills confidently. Tutors encourage them to participate in class ICT demonstrations. Sessions are well planned and schemes of work are detailed. Learners understand their learning objectives well. In most lessons the individual learners' needs are met, however, on occasions the more able learners are insufficiently challenged. The safe use of computers is emphasised satisfactorily in every lesson.
25. Assessment is good. Some course tutors effectively use on-line assessment. For example, tutors monitor learners who submit work or perform on-line tasks out of college using this system well. Written feedback on learners' work is satisfactory. The processes to recognise and record achievement are satisfactory. All learners have individual learning plans where their initial skills targets are sufficiently documented however, progress is not always monitored sufficiently. Learner records do not always sufficiently reflect their learning.
26. Printed learning resources are well prepared and a wide range of on-line learning activities is available. The new bright and airy library provides good drop-in access to computers outside class times but some workstations are cramped and make it difficult for learners to use their textbooks, with little room for group work.
27. Programmes and activities are flexible, meeting the needs and interest of learners and the local community well. For example, learners with relevant prior attainment can take a faster route to complete a qualification more quickly. Learners are well aware of progression routes and many successfully progress from entry level courses to develop more advanced skills. The development

and introduction of the national vocational information technology qualification (ITQ) has been slow.

28. Information and guidance for learners is good. On most courses initial assessment is well designed and used effectively to plan learning. Induction programmes are planned and implemented well, learners remember and value the experience. Learners report that they get useful information about progression opportunities.
29. ALS is particularly effective. Success rates of those with assessed learning support needs are slightly higher than overall success rates for the college. ALS staff receive the lesson plan and scheme of work before class and discuss individual learning needs with the tutor. Good additional support is provided in the class.

Leadership and management

30. Curriculum leadership and management are good. The self-assessment report is accurate and includes a very wide range of evidence from which a strong quality improvement plan is produced. The learners' voice is used well and all staff are involved well in reviewing courses. Since the previous inspection, success rates, punctuality, accommodation and assessment practice have improved. Course organisation is good and meetings are well documented and actions followed up. Computer classroom accommodation is satisfactory and each computer room has an interactive whiteboard.
31. OTL is very clearly recorded with action plans which are followed up very promptly. The manager organises appraisals well, using targets for success and improvements from observations. Staff are suitably qualified with appropriate staff development opportunities. Communication with part-time tutors is good and they attend meetings and staff training events. Learning materials are shared well between tutors.
32. The focus on equality and diversity is excellent. Success rates of learners with declared disability and/or learning difficulties are good. Support to meet individual learning needs is good. The level of learner satisfaction is good, especially with regard to course organisation and all aspects of teaching and learning.

Visual arts

Good: Grade 2

Context

33. Currently, 656 learners attend accredited and non-accredited short and long courses at levels 1,2 and 3 which run during the day and evening. Most sessions are part-time and take place at the WMC main site. There were 1118 enrolments in 2006/07. Most learners are female, 36% are from a minority ethnic background. The 35 tutors are responsible to four curriculum managers, one development manager and an overall programme manager.

Strengths

- Very high success rates on accredited programmes
- Good attainment of technical skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Good progression to further and higher education
- Particularly effective curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Inconsistent identification of learning goals and outcomes

Achievement and standards

34. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are very high on accredited courses. Non-accredited success rates are high. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Progression rates to higher level courses are good. Most learners on access courses progress to higher education at the end of their programme. Many other learners on short programmes also progress internally

to accredited programmes offered by WMC, such as access to higher education and the foundation degree.

35. Learners attain a range of good technical skills. Learners develop confidence and enjoy their learning sessions. In beginners' sessions tutors emphasise the importance of developing a wide range of technical skills well. This includes preparing clay and basic building techniques such as slabbing, coiling, moulding and pinch pots before progressing onto more advanced techniques such as creating ceramic pots using specialist equipment. Tutors also help more advanced learners in sessions such as etching to develop the use of higher level drawing, conceptual skills and experimentation.
36. Overall, the standard of learners' work matches their course level and prior experience. Many learners have no prior experience of visual arts and progress well compared with their prior attainment. Some of these learners produce good standards of work. For example, learners new to ceramics and jewellery have produced some exceptionally good technical and highly creative work.

Quality of provision

37. The quality of provision is good. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons tutors clearly challenge learners to do their best. For example, in several classes learners took part in a peer critique to evaluate progress and achievement. In another class of very experienced learners the teacher continually checked and questioned learners' performance. Tutors provide good reinforcement to support the development of skills.
38. Tutors provide opportunities for learners to access specialist facilities outside timetabled sessions to support the completion of work. Tutors offer extra support to learners preparing for higher education course interviews. Learners are permitted to contact tutors after the course has finished for visual arts advice and guidance.
39. Tutors provide good quality individual verbal feedback to learners during sessions. Learners use the information well to improve their skills. Some tutors do not identify and record evidence of learners' learning goals and outcomes consistently well. Some individual learning plans contain lists of topics or skills which are insufficiently individualised. Where tutors are good at planning learning goals and setting targets, good practice is insufficiently shared.

40. WMC meets the needs and interests of visual arts learners well. A good variety of enrichment activities add value to the learner's experience. For example, tutors take learners on study trips to galleries, learner performances and exhibitions. They also provide access to practising artists, and a variety of cross-college activities. Many tutors have high level vocational skills and are also practising artists. They promote current industry practice well, which is greatly appreciated by the learners.
41. Advice, guidance and general support are good. Learners receive good pastoral support and guidance from tutors in teaching sessions. Arrangements for ALS are satisfactory, with most learners aware of the range of available services yet few learners take up additional support as they feel their needs are adequately supported by their tutors.

Leadership and management

42. Leadership and management are good. Leaders provide a clear vision for the curriculum area, which is understood and shared by the staff across the department. A key focus has been the successful change of the curriculum offer, which is now more responsive to learners' needs and interests. Staff feel well supported and included in development and improvement activities such as self-assessment and quality improvement processes. The curriculum area self-assessment report broadly reflects strengths and areas for improvement identified at inspection.
43. The standard of specialist accommodation and resources is satisfactory overall, most studios have sufficient equipment to enable learners to develop a wide range of technical skills. Some accommodation is much improved since the previous inspection and is now good, for example, the ceramic studio. Many classrooms have interactive whiteboards that are regularly used creatively in the delivery of sessions.
44. OTL is well established. Tutors' improvement plans resulting from observations contribute to their personal development and are checked to determine their progress.
45. Equality of opportunity and social inclusion are good. Tutors often set projects that involve the research of other cultures, such as ancient China. Learners' work reflects their own cultural diversity and interests, for example, one learner is currently using events in Iraq as the background for their work.

English for speakers of other languages

Outstanding: Grade 1

Context

46. Currently, 844 learners are enrolled on ESOL courses. WMC currently provides 216 ESOL courses, 65 of which are in community venues. In 2006/07 there were 1803 enrolments. Of these, 71% were women. Sixty-three learners declared a learning difficulty and/or disability. Courses are offered at pre-entry to level 2, during the day and evening. The courses on the main college site are for five to ten hours a week for 12 weeks. Courses elsewhere are between two and four hours a week. There are 12 permanently employed tutors in addition to the assistant director for skills for life, four curriculum managers, and five part-time staff.

Strengths

- High success rates with very good retention
- Outstanding development of language skills
- Excellent teaching and learning
- Very good engagement with the community
- Outstanding induction
- Outstanding leadership and management

Areas for improvement

- No areas for improvement identified

Achievement and standards

47. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates are high and retention is very good. The overall success rate for 2006/07 is 80%. The 2006/07 success rate at entry level 2 was particularly good at 87%, with all successful learners achieving full qualifications. The overall retention rate was 91% in 2006/07, 94% are retained or still attending courses in the current year. Attendance is satisfactory. Poor punctuality or attendance is followed up effectively.
48. Learners' development of language skills is outstanding. Key features of learners' attained language skills are the confidence with which they express themselves and the way they contribute fully to college life. Learners discuss their learning and progress with enthusiasm and can use grammatical terms well. Learners show very good progress in developing language skills in class. Learners at level 2 show a very high ability to analyse texts and to plan writing in different styles. At level 1 they collaboratively produce letters of a high standard. At the lower levels, learners take part enthusiastically in discussions and literacy is systematically developed. Learners gave examples of successful use of English in their lives, including being able to help others when they need it.
49. Learners play a full part in the life of the college through celebrations of culture and achievement, giving presentations, and taking up opportunities to express their views on the quality of the college formally to the principal. For example, a Chinese learner participated in charity work, raising a substantial sum for earthquake victims.

Quality of provision

50. The quality of provision is outstanding. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Classes are very lively and stimulating and tutors provide a variety of pair and group activities to develop communication skills. Learners show well developed ability to evaluate their own work. Tutors devise good individualised learning tasks. Computers, interactive whiteboard, audio and paper-based resources are all used effectively to provide challenge and meet individual learning needs. Initial assessment is thorough and used to plan learning very well. The process of recording and recognising learners' progress and achievement is thorough. Learners are given group goals for each term's work, together with individual targets which are specific and relevant. Tutors integrate planning with the learning process effectively and evidence is used well in learners' progress reviews. Learning outside the classroom is encouraged. For example, learners have taken part in a project with the British Museum, where their work about 'The First Emperor' exhibition was displayed.

51. WMC is outstanding at meeting the needs and interests of learners. It is very good at engaging with the local community, 36% of classes currently provided are in the community. Classes include ESOL for parents and contextualised courses such as a course for Imams from local mosques. Classes are provided through Bangladeshi, Somali, Congolese, Cypriot and Filipino organisations. Community initiatives are particularly well planned and developed, and there are many examples of how learners from some of the most deprived wards are engaged in first steps into learning. In a community-based class, women who had never used computers before said they were now confident and could help their children. Learners are encouraged to move to classes on the main college site when they feel ready. Visits to Parliament, the Old Bailey and museums are highly valued by learners and promote the citizenship agenda.
52. Advice guidance and support for learners is outstanding. Bilingual outreach workers carefully advise and guide learners in community-based classes. In 2006/07 the retention rate for those having ALS was outstanding at 95%. Dyslexia support is provided by a specialist. Individual learning plans are of good quality and learners are well supported by the monitoring of targets and regular reviews. Learners receive very good support from student services. Arrangements for crèche support in community-based classes are very good.
53. Induction for learners is outstanding. The pre-course packs for each level are exceptionally good. They give learners confidence. Staff promote learners rights and responsibilities and how they will learn very clearly.

Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are outstanding. The quality of provision and success rates has improved significantly in recent years. Management processes are highly responsive and inclusive to learners. Feedback from learners is highly valued and used effectively. Curriculum planning is astute and has been implemented well to provide learners with good opportunities to learn and progress. Staff are well qualified. The observation of teaching and learning is well established. Induction for new staff is very good. Staff are very well supported and communication is very good. Culture and language are celebrated in many ways including excellent visual displays and a diversity day. Most of the ESOL staff are minority ethnic or speak English as a second language. Learners are very well aware of their rights and responsibilities, and of the college's commitment to equality and diversity.