

College of North West London

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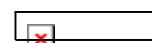
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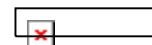
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Basic information about the college

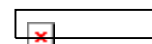


| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name of college: | College of North West London |
| Type of college: | General further education |
| Principal: | Vicki Fagg |
| Address of college: | Willesden Centre Dudden Hill Lane London NW10 2XD |
| Telephone number: | 020 8208 5000 |
| Fax number: | 020 8208 5161 |
| Chair of governors: | Gerry Davis |
| Unique reference number: | 108782 |
| Name of reporting inspector: | Nigel Flood |
| Dates of inspection: | 12-23 January 2004 |

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

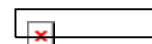


The College of North West London is a large general further education (FE) college situated in the outer London borough of Brent. The college has three main centres. These are at Kilburn, Willesden and Wembley. The largest centre is Willesden, with around half the college's students; Wembley has just under one-third and Kilburn around one-sixth. The remainder of the students are at sites across Brent. The college provides programmes in all areas of learning identified by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), apart from land-based provision. The areas of learning with the largest numbers of students are foundation studies, construction, information and communications technology (ICT), engineering, and business administration, management and professional. In other areas, such as retailing, customer service and transportation and hospitality, sports, leisure and tourism, the number of students is low. Courses range from entry level to level 4. The college provides learning in the community and a small number of work-based learning and Jobcentre Plus programmes. During 2001/02, there were 2,192 students aged 16 to 18, of whom 53% were full time, and 14,208 adult students, of whom 74% were part time. Some 53% of students were female and 68% were of minority ethnic origin.

The population of Brent was 263,464 in 2001, of which some 54.7% are from minority ethnic groups. Some 80% of Brent's economic activity is in the service sector, of which around one-third is in distribution, hotels and restaurants. The remainder is in manufacturing and construction. Unemployment in Brent in November 2003 was 4.6%, against a national average of 2.4%. This is the highest level of unemployment of the outer London boroughs and the fifth highest of all London boroughs. The borough is number 68 out of 355 for the highest levels of deprivation in England. Around two-thirds of the college's students are from areas of high deprivation. The percentage of pupils achieving five general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) qualifications at grades A* to C in Brent in 2003 was 51%, against a national average of 53%.

The college's mission is, 'to lead in the provision of learning for work in response to the changing needs of London's economy and in partnership with employers and the community'.

How effective is the college?



The quality of provision is good in four curriculum areas, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in one. The quality of teaching for adult students was better than that for students aged 16 to 18. The college's main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- increasing retention rates at level 2 and 3

- increasing pass rates for most qualifications
- high standard of most students' vocational skills particularly in plumbing
- good resources in construction and ICT provision
- good support for students
- outstanding response to social inclusion
- very strong promotion of equality of opportunity
- good strategic management.

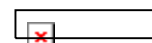
What should be improved

- pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at level 3
- proportion of good or better teaching
- punctuality of many students
- achievement of work-based learners and Jobcentre Plus clients
- provision in science and mathematics

- o accommodation at the Kilburn centre.

Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in the sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

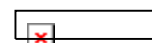


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the range: Outstanding (grade 1), Good (2), Satisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (4), Very Poor (5).

| Area | Overall judgements about provision, and comment |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Science and mathematics | Unsatisfactory. A wide range of courses meet local needs. Most retention rates are high, but pass rates for advanced subsidiary level (AS-level) provision are very low. A significant minority of teaching is unsatisfactory and there is insufficient teaching that is good or better. Managers are slow to respond to deficiencies in the curriculum area. |
| Construction | Good. Plumbing contributory grade: outstanding. Work-based learning contributory grade: satisfactory. Pass and retention rates for plumbing and level 1 painting and decorating courses were high in 2003. Teaching and learning for construction is of a high standard, especially in plumbing. The range of construction courses is wide and links with employers are very good. Pass rates on intermediate construction courses in 2002 and 2003 were low. |
| Engineering | Good. Most pass rates are high and increasing and students make good progress during their course of study. Most teaching and learning are good and none is unsatisfactory. There are good links with industry. Retention rates on many courses are low. |
| Business administration, management and professional | Satisfactory. The development of students' personal and learning skills is good. Students receive strong support from staff. Pass rates on some courses are low. Students' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. |
| Information and communications technology | Satisfactory. Pass rates for computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate courses in 2003 were high. Much of the teaching and learning is good. There are low pass rates on national certificate in computing and AS level computing courses. Students' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | Satisfactory. Pass rates on national vocational qualification (NVQ) hairdressing and beauty therapy courses at level 3 and retention rates on most courses are high. Students' practical work is good. The pass rates on NVQ level 1 hairdressing and part-time beauty therapy courses are low. There is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) in teaching and learning. |
| Health and social care | Good. Students' achievements on most courses are good. Adult |

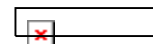
| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | students make significant progress during their course of study. Much of the teaching is good. Students' punctuality is unsatisfactory. |
| Visual and performing arts and media | Satisfactory. Art, design and media contributory grade: unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning in performing arts are very good. The standard of work on clothing manufacture courses is high, and students draw on their different cultural backgrounds when designing and producing garments. In art, design and media, there is insufficient good or better teaching and some that is less than satisfactory. Students' punctuality and attendance is unsatisfactory. |
| English, modern languages, English as a foreign language and interpreting languages | Satisfactory. Retention rates on interpreting and GCSE English courses are good and there are high pass rates on community interpreting courses. Much of the teaching and learning is good. Retention rates are low on some languages courses, as are pass rates on the GCSE foundation English and some language and English as a foreign language (EFL) courses. Students' punctuality is unsatisfactory. |
| English for speakers of other languages | Satisfactory. Students make effective progress in the use of everyday language and teachers' use of learning resources is good. The college is effective in meeting the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) needs of groups that are hard to reach. Some teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Few courses provide progression to vocational courses. |
| Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities | Good. Most students make significant progress during their course of study; many progress to employment. There is good teaching and good support for learning. Links with the community are excellent. The use of learning targets and reviews of students' performance in individual learning plans is unsatisfactory. |
| Literacy and numeracy | Satisfactory. The level of individual learning support for students on literacy and numeracy courses is good. Retention rates on most courses are high. Pass rates on key skills courses are very low. The setting of learning targets for students, and reviews of their progress, are inadequate. |

How well is the college led and managed?



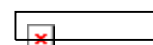
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior management team and the governors provide good strategic leadership. Over the last three years, most pass rates have steadily increased and are at or above the national average. Students' attendance has improved, but their punctuality remains unsatisfactory. The college is effective in meeting community needs through developing collaborative partnerships. The proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including refugees and asylum seekers, has steadily increased. The college's response to equality of opportunity and diversity is outstanding. Quality assurance arrangements are well established, but their impact varies considerably across the college. The college has reduced the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, although there is a below-average amount of good or better teaching. The college has made no significant attempt to analyse and evaluate the extent to which courses increase students' achievements above what might have been predicted from their previous attainments at entry. The self-assessment report is comprehensive, but slightly generous. The management of most curriculum areas is satisfactory. Staff development is good and the management of finances is effective.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



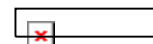
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. Provision for disadvantaged groups and those who do not normally enter FE is very good. Equality of opportunity and diversity have a very high priority. The college provides a safe and harmonious environment. Students and staff have mutual respect for each other. In 2002/03, 65% of students were from disadvantaged backgrounds and 17% of these were refugees or asylum seekers. Over 60% of students do not have English as their first language. The college has developed the curriculum to meet the changing needs of the local community. Much of the curriculum is now offered at entry level and level 1. The ESOL and vocational provision is carefully designed to take account of students' cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The number of women students has steadily increased from a low number. The college works in close partnership with many community organisations. It is making a major contribution towards the aspirations of local people and in aiding the regeneration of Brent. Provision for Muslim students aged 16 to 18 and for local school pupils aged 14 to 16 has been developed. A manager has responsibility for equal opportunities and diversity issues. The ethnic profile of the staff is similar to that of local population. The college has updated its equal opportunities policy and other related policies. In response to its responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), the college has implemented action plans and is making good progress. There is effective numeracy, literacy and language support for students.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students are good. Potential students receive high-quality course information and impartial advice. Initial assessment of all full-time and many part-time students identifies literacy, language, numeracy, and other support needs. Nearly all students identified as requiring help have good support. Induction is effective and is well organised. Tutorial support, including that for work-based learning programmes, is satisfactory to good. Students have individual learning plans but the setting of learning targets is not always effective. The college's punctuality policy is clear but its use is not consistent across all curriculum areas. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place but not all staff are aware of them. Arrangements for counselling, welfare and finance support are well organised.

Students' views of the college



Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below.

What students like about the college

- knowledgeable and friendly teachers

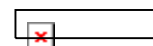
- helpful support staff

- access to ICT facilities
- positive and comfortable atmosphere
- feedback on assignments
- induction.

What they feel could be improved

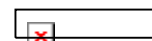
- the range, quality and price of food in the catering facilities
- cleanliness of toilets
- parking facilities
- access to drinking water.

Other information

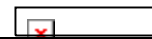


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

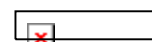


| Aspect & learner type | Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) % | Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) % | Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) % |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Teaching 16-18 | 49 | 43 | 8 |
| 19+ and WBL* | 58 | 37 | 5 |
| Learning 16-18 | 51 | 43 | 6 |
| 19+ and WBL* | 59 | 36 | 5 |

Key: The range of grades includes: Excellent (Grade 1), Very Good (Grade 2), Good (Grade 3), Satisfactory (Grade 4), Unsatisfactory (Grade 5), Poor (Grade 6) and Very Poor (Grade 7).

** work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. Around 80% of pass rates have increased between 2001 and 2003. Most pass rates in 2003 were at or above the national average for similar colleges. Around 80% of retention rates also increased between 2001 and 2003. In 2003, most of these rates were similar to or above the national average, and for level 3 qualifications they were in the top 25% for general FE colleges. Generally, students make satisfactory or better progress when their results are compared with prior levels of attainment and learning, and most are improving their personal and learning skills. A weakness from the 1996 and 2001 inspections of the college by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) was unsatisfactory punctuality of students. College managers have developed significant actions to resolve this weakness but students' punctuality remains poor.

16 to 18 year olds

2. Two-thirds of pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 between 2001 and 2003 have increased and in 2003 were close to or above the national average. At level 3, however, the pass rates have remained significantly below the national average for the last three years. Particularly low were AS level and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A-level) pass rates, which in 2003 were 22% below the national average. Most retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 in 2003 were similar to or above the national average. Four-fifths of retention rates increased between 2001 and 2003. At level 1, the retention rate decreased by 8% between 2001 and 2002 but increased again in 2003. There was a significant decline of 43% in the retention rate for NVQ level 1 courses between 2002 and 2003.

3. The percentage of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grades A* to C in local schools is just below the national average. Most students aged 16 to 18 recruited by the college are those who do not achieve five GCSEs at grades A* to C, come from areas of high deprivation and have English as a second language. Most of these students are making satisfactory or better progress compared to prior levels of attainment and are developing effective personal and learning skills. In most areas of learning, students are developing good occupational skills. These are strong in construction (particularly

plumbing), hairdressing and beauty therapy, health and social care and performing arts. Plumbing students produce complex pipe work: often above the standard required by awarding bodies. In health and social care, students are able to link theory to workplace practices well. Performing arts students in drama production develop excellent characterisation and improvise extremes of emotion particularly well. However, in science and mathematics, a number of students do not have sufficient knowledge to understand and describe parts of the subject they are studying. Work-based learners develop occupational skills which meet the standards required by industry and the quality of their portfolios of evidence is satisfactory or better.

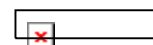
4. The number of work-based learners who successfully complete all aspects of the framework is low. Between 2000 and 2003, only 17% of those who started their learning programme completed it successfully. The overall NVQ pass rate for work-based learning between 2000 and 2003 was better than that for the completion of the framework, with 36% of learners achieving the award. The main reasons for the low achievement of the framework were the lack of success of learners in achieving the key skills qualification.

Adult learners

5. Around four-fifths of pass rates for adult students in 2003 were around the national average. Pass rates for higher level courses were 11% above the national average, but the pass rate for short courses was 11% below. Between 2001 and 2003, around four-fifths of pass rates increased by 5% or more. At level 1, the increase was significant and the rate increased by 14%. Most retention rates between 2001 and 2003 for adult students were close to or above the national average. At levels 2 and 3, retention rates increased between 2001 and 2003 but at level 1 and level 4 the rates declined. The proportion of Jobcentre Plus clients who move to employment is small. Between 2001 and 2004, only 16% of clients of those who started a programme of learning gained employment. Just under one-third of clients left early.

6. The college recruits adult students from a wide range of backgrounds. In many instances, these students come from areas of high deprivation and from groups who traditionally are under-represented in FE, including refugees and asylum seekers. For around two-thirds of students, English is not their first language. Adults make satisfactory or better progress compared to prior levels of attainment, although a slightly greater proportion of adult students make less-than-satisfactory progress compared with students aged 16 to 18. Nearly all adults develop satisfactory or better personal and learning skills during their time at college. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress during their time at college and around one-third move into employment. Clothing and garment students have high standards of sewing skills. Literacy and numeracy students make accurate and comprehensive notes during lessons. Most students on interpreting courses are bilingual and have well-developed oral interpreting skills. ESOL students make good progress despite difficulties, in many cases, in their personal lives and circumstances. However, ESOL, EFL and language students do not make sufficient progress with their writing skills. Media students' drawing skills for storyboards are not sufficiently developed.

Quality of education and training



7. Teaching and learning were graded by inspectors in 265 lessons, covering 12 curriculum areas, as well as work-based learning provision in two areas. While teaching and learning were at least satisfactory in most lessons, they were good or better in too few. Teaching was good or better in 56% of lessons, which is below the national average of 65% for all colleges in 2001/02. Less than satisfactory teaching was observed in 5% of lessons, which is slightly better than the national average of 8%. Learning was good or better in 56% of lessons, compared with 63% nationally, and less than satisfactory in 6%.

8. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons for adult students is significantly better than that in

lessons where most students are aged 16 to 18. There are also differences in the quality of teaching and learning by level of study. Teaching at levels 2 and 3 is of higher quality, with about 60% judged good or better. About half of lessons at entry level and level 1 have teaching which is satisfactory, rather than good or better. The greatest proportions of unsatisfactory teaching are at entry level and level 1, and the smallest are at level 3. The majority of teaching and learning is satisfactory or better in work-based learning and for students aged 14 to 16.

9. There is consistently good teaching in engineering, ICT, health and social care, English and language studies and in construction, particularly in plumbing. The areas with below average proportions of good or better teaching are science and mathematics, business and professional studies, visual and media studies, ESOL, literacy and numeracy and foundation programmes. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed in construction, engineering, business, ICT, health and social care, performing arts or foundation programmes.

10. In lessons where teaching is good or better, there is careful planning to ensure that account is taken of the needs of the college's very diverse student body. Teachers are skilled at creating a friendly, supportive but business-like atmosphere in lessons, which encourages students to feel confident in their learning. There is good reinforcement and checking of learning, and emphasis on the acquisition of new subject-related vocabulary. In some lessons, particularly good use is made of the students' cultural backgrounds to stimulate debate relevant to their studies, as well as to promote understanding and tolerance, and to celebrate difference. Effective examples included those seen in hairdressing, fashion, performing arts and health and social care. On ESOL and interpreting courses, good use is made of students' own languages. Lessons are made interesting and relevant when teachers draw effectively on links with employers and on students' own experience, as observed in business, health and care, construction and engineering. Good learning resources, such as well-designed assignments and case studies, and aids, such as video recordings, are used to stimulate interest. There is good use of ILT in engineering.

11. In the weaker lessons, students' specific learning needs are not always taken into account or effectively met, and some lessons are dull and uninspiring. Lessons are not planned to involve students sufficiently in learning, but rely too heavily on input from teachers, and there are insufficient checks on learning. Sometimes teachers are too quick to answer their own questions and move on without spending enough time explaining concepts, as observed in science. In some lessons for students on foundation programmes, and in literacy and numeracy, there is over-reliance on worksheets. The use of ILT is not well developed in health and social care, foundation programmes, and hairdressing. Students' lack of punctuality is not always sufficiently challenged.

12. Students respond particularly well to opportunities for practical work; the teaching of practical skills is often better than the teaching of theory. In the best practical lessons, teachers use demonstrations effectively to set a high standard for students: for example, in engineering. They link the subject matter effectively to the industrial or workplace context. Examples of the successful acquisition of practical skills were observed in construction, hairdressing, science, clothing manufacture, and performing arts. There were some good examples of learning in the workplace, for example, in motor vehicle body repair and plumbing. Students are knowledgeable about health and safety requirements. By contrast, theory lessons are sometimes dull and less interesting to students, resulting in less progress in learning.

13. Most teachers are well qualified and experienced. The percentage of part-time teachers who have teaching qualifications or are working towards them is low, at 53%. However, the college has established arrangements for teacher training. Technical support staff, assessors and verifiers have appropriate qualifications and experience. Professional development of staff is satisfactory in most areas, but is insufficient in hairdressing.

14. The college is generally clean and well maintained, and accommodation consists of a range of old and new buildings. Conversions to premises at the Willesden centre have led to improvements. However, accommodation in the wood machine shop and some motor vehicle workshops is cramped. Accommodation at the Wembley centre is mostly adequate. Some lifts at Wembley are too restricting for wheelchair users. The Kilburn centre is old, and many areas are unsuitable for teaching. Some teaching rooms are not easily accessible for students with restricted mobility. At

some community sites, teaching areas are cramped and laboratory provision and ICT resources are inadequate.

15. Specialist resources for engineering, construction and ESOL programmes are good.

16. The college has made a significant investment in ICT facilities. Each centre has a well-equipped ICT suite. The college has a three-year programme to replace and update computers. The range of ILT is good and, where it is appropriate, it is adapted for students with disabilities. There are comprehensive arrangements for health and safety. However, insufficient attention is given to health and safety issues with chairs and cables when using ICT. Learning resource centres are well equipped and there are areas where students can work in small groups or independently. Stocks of textbooks, videos and CD-ROMs are adequate. The college's intranet is well organised and provides some useful information. However, some areas are insufficiently developed, vary in content and many useful features are not used.

17. Arrangements for initial assessment are satisfactory. The assessments provide an accurate basis to plan students' learning programmes. The college has appropriate policies and procedures for assessment and verification. Most of the college's assessment and internal verification meets awarding body standards. Assessment is adequate in most curriculum areas and it is good in construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy and work-based learning. Teachers use assessment and verification to plan learning and to monitor students' progress. Assessments are well designed, fair, accurate and valid. Students understand the assessment process. Internal verification is effective and well managed across most curriculum areas. When there are issues, the college takes prompt actions to resolve them. In visual and performing arts and media, in some instances, the carrying out of assessments is slow. There are insufficient workplace assessments for clients on Jobcentre Plus programmes in business administration. In science, some assignment work for GNVQ intermediate students does not meet awarding body requirements.

18. On most courses, students' work is returned promptly and marked accurately, and provides sufficient feedback for students to make progress. In health and social care, there is good feedback from teachers on assignments to improve students' work. However, in construction and engineering, feedback does not adequately inform students how to improve. The college provides termly progress reports to parents of students aged 16 to 18. Although there is frequent contact with parents when issues arise, there are no parents' evenings in some curriculum areas.

19. The college offers a wide range of courses from entry level to level 4 to meet the needs of students and local and regional employers. Progression routes are good to FE and higher education (HE) and employment in ICT, visual and performing arts and media and science and mathematics. There are insufficient opportunities for ESOL students to gain access to other courses and vocational training. There is no level 1 course for beauty therapy or visual and performing arts and media students.

20. Links with employers are very good in construction and engineering. In these areas, the college has been very responsive to local and regional skills shortages by increasing the range of provision. Relationships with employers providing work-based learning in construction, engineering and health and social care are effective. Work experience is a key part of most full-time programmes. However, it is insufficient for accountancy and ICT students. The college works closely with other local organisations to provide literacy and numeracy courses in the community.

21. The college takes very effective action to widen participation, particularly for those facing significant barriers to learning. A wide range of courses is available to meet the different requirements of local groups. For example, successful outreach projects support Somali students to learn English and an interpreting course offers 13 languages including Farsi and Russian. A partnership with a local Islamic college enables students to study in an environment which takes effective account of the requirements of their faith.

22. Key skills achievement is poor. Most students take basic skills qualifications before moving to key skills units. Key skills co-ordinators work closely with curriculum area staff, advising and

supporting curriculum development. Key skills are an integral part of the provision in construction, engineering and health and social care, but not in hairdressing and beauty therapy or for GCSE English. The college has developed an action plan to improve basic and key skills provision but it is too early to judge whether it has been successful.

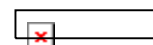
23. The college offers an appropriate range of vocational courses for students aged 14 to 16 in hospitality, hairdressing, engineering and construction. There is good progression from these courses to further training and education. The management of the provision is satisfactory and there are effective links with local secondary schools.

24. Support for students is good. Guidance is effective and there are good links between support services and the curriculum areas. The college provides potential students with high-quality course information. Helpful initial advice and guidance direct most students to an appropriate course. In science and mathematics, the college recruits some students to AS-level courses who are not ready for study at this level. Effective induction introduces students to the college and their courses. Careers advice and guidance are good. The location and layout of careers, advice and guidance centres enable potential students to gain good access to information. There have been some delays in dealing with applications for individual careers interviews. Some students on ESOL courses received insufficient advice about progression to vocational courses.

25. The quality of learning support is good. All full-time and substantial part-time students receive an initial assessment to establish literacy, numeracy, language support and other additional support needs. Some 98% of those identified as needing support receive help. There are good support arrangements for students with sensory impairments and for those with specific learning difficulties. The college only assesses a few students for learning support on courses with less than 200 guided learning hours. All students on these courses are given advice about the support that is available to them.

26. Students value the support they receive from tutors. Most tutorials are satisfactory or better. All students on full-time and substantial part-time courses have a personal tutor and weekly tutorials. Students on evening and short courses receive information about support services from their teachers. The handbook and the information on the staff intranet for tutors are comprehensive. Training for tutors is good but there is no monitoring of the effectiveness of tutorials. Support for work-based learners is strong. The student liaison team is effective and the facilities in the common rooms are good. Personal counselling and advice and guidance on welfare and finance are well organised. There are effective arrangements to support students' childcare needs. The college provides a wide range of enrichment activities including visits to cultural events, conferences, museums and galleries and taking part in exhibitions. Difficulties with timetables and travel have restricted the numbers taking part in these activities to around one-third of students. Students have individual learning plans but these are not used consistently and target setting is not always effective. Not all curriculum areas use the college's punctuality policy consistently. A member of staff has responsibility for child protection arrangements but this is not widely known among staff.

Leadership and management



27. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has responded well to the issues raised in the last inspection. Retention and pass rates have mostly increased. When compared with other similar colleges, except at level 3, rates are now around the national average. Students' attendance has improved but punctuality remains unsatisfactory. There have been improvements to the quality assurance system. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has decreased but the amount of teaching that is good or better is below the average for the sector. Strategic planning is good. The college is effective in meeting community needs and works collaboratively with other organisations. The proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including refugees and asylum seekers, has steadily increased. Curriculum management is satisfactory.

28. The senior management team and the governors provide good strategic leadership. The strategic planning process is well organised and consultative. The new college mission makes clear links between learning and preparation for work. Through a series of events, staff and the governors are able to contribute to the process effectively. The well-written corporate plan has clear targets and focuses on improving students' learning while increasing provision for disadvantaged groups and those who do not normally enter FE. In 2002/03, 65% of students were from disadvantaged backgrounds and 17% of these were refugees or asylum seekers. Over 60% of students do not have English as their first language. The college's ambitious property plan covers the redevelopment of the Kilburn centre, upgrading the accommodation at Willesden and the possibility of a new centre located at the Wembley Park development.

29. Governance is effective. The relationship between the governors and the senior management team is good. Governors have a thorough understanding of the college's key challenges and a clear vision for the future. Governors are very experienced and bring a wide range of professional knowledge and experience. The corporation's subcommittees are effective. They receive regular and detailed reports from the college managers. Quality and financial monitoring are good. Governor links to curriculum areas, although planned, are not fully effective. Governors are highly committed and enthusiastic about the college. They attend college events including awards ceremonies.

30. The curriculum areas and cross-college support services development plans are comprehensive and build on the outcomes of the self-assessment process, attainment of course targets, local priorities and strategic objectives. However, it is unclear how the achievement of the individual targets will enable the college to complete its overall corporate plan. Senior managers monitor action plans carefully. Staff understand their clearly defined responsibilities.

31. Governors have recently appointed a former member of the senior management team to the post of principal. Following the tragic death of the previous principal, temporary arrangements were in place for nearly a year. Despite these sad circumstances, there was effective management of the college. The style of management is open and transparent. Communications are generally good, but the last staff survey indicated that only 60% thought this was the position. Minutes of meetings are good, with clear action points to resolve issues. Staff extensively use the good intranet and e-mail facilities. The monthly college newsletter celebrates achievements. Senior managers regularly attend staff meetings and curriculum events. In some curriculum areas, staff shortages are being resolved through innovative approaches. For example, the college provides engineering and construction technicians with teacher training and then employs them as teachers.

32. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The quality assurance policy is thorough and quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive. An effective calendar of activities links together course reviews, student data analysis, stakeholder feedback, focus groups and the writing of the annual self-assessment report. The standards review panel scrutinises course performance and managers take action to improve poorly performing courses. Staff understand and are fully involved in the process. The quality assurance system is successful in improving students' achievements and attendance, and in reducing the number of unsatisfactory lessons. However, some important aspects have not sufficiently improved, including the proportion of good or better teaching. The college's lesson observation scheme requires that all teachers be observed at least once a year. In 2002/03, 69% of observed teaching was graded as good or better. However, inspectors found teaching to be good or better in only 56% of lessons, which is below the national average. Students' punctuality is unsatisfactory and pass rates at level 3 for students aged 16 to 18 have remained well below the national average. The college has made no significant attempt to analyse and evaluate the extent to which courses have increased students' achievements above what might have been predicted from their previous attainments at entry. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and identifies most of the strengths found by inspectors, but omits or underestimates some key weaknesses. Managers monitor action plans from the self-assessment reports carefully.

33. Management of most curriculum areas is satisfactory. Teams meet regularly and, where possible, part-time staff are fully involved. In many areas, good practice is shared. In engineering, there is a good system for monitoring students' attendance and recording the actions taken when it is unsatisfactory. In business administration, management and professional, managers have resolved significant weaknesses. The teaching of some courses in subject modules is helping to

improve students' achievements. Managers are sensitive to the needs of the community. On courses for students with specific learning difficulties, there is good deployment of support staff. The college has two Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) in construction subjects. Some aspects of curriculum management are less than effective. For example, in science and mathematics, there has been a failure to respond to declining pass rates, poor assignment standards and significant increases in numbers.

34. The college has a well-designed management information system. The staff intranet enables managers to receive a range of information and reports. Increasingly, staff use these to help make decisions. Teachers use the system to enter students' attendance for each lesson. This helps monitor accurately attendance at all levels. However, the use of management information across the college is not consistent or effective. For example, in hairdressing the course team used different data in the self-assessment than that provided from the college systems.

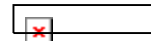
35. The college's approach to equal opportunities and widening participation is outstanding. The regularly updated equal opportunities policies meet the college's obligations to recent legislation. There are good anti-harassment measures, appeals and complaints procedures, but the language used is not always sufficiently clear. Leaflets and student surveys use community languages. In response to its responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and SENDA, the college has implemented action plans and is making good progress to resolve issues. Senior managers act on race, equality and diversity measures and ensure that they are included in action plans. Arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing progress are good. There is good statistical monitoring of staffing, student participation and pass rates by ethnicity, gender, age and disability, which contributes to further action. Annual reports are sent to the academic board and the corporation and posted on the staff intranet. Staff receive regular training, for example, on their responsibilities under SENDA. Planned building works take account of these requirements.

36. The college works in close partnership with many community organisations. There have been many curriculum projects for disadvantaged groups including refugees, asylum seekers and people with a visual impairment. The college now offers much of its provision at entry and level 1. Vocational progression routes for ESOL students are not sufficiently developed but there has been careful design of the provision to take account of students' cultural and ethnic needs. The number of women students has steadily increased from a low number. The college is making a major contribution in meeting the aspirations of local people and in aiding the regeneration of Brent. The college has developed provision for Muslim students aged 16 to 18 and local school pupils aged 14 to 16. There is effective management of equal opportunities and diversity, with good support from the college's equality champions. The ethnic profile of the staff is similar to the local population. The college provides very good support for minority ethnic staff and there is an active mentoring group for black staff. Cross-college activities include an excellent Black history month and an equal opportunities week.

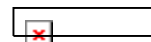
37. Opportunities for staff to receive development and training are good. The staff training plan takes into account strategic priorities and the outcomes of appraisals. The appraisal process is satisfactory and includes a review of teachers' lesson observation grades. However, over the last two years, one-fifth of staff has not been appraised. Staff speak highly about the range and diversity of training opportunities. New teachers receive good support from their mentors. Professional updating in a few curriculum areas is less effective. There is careful monitoring of training plans and their costs.

38. The management of financial resources is good. The college has moved from a weak financial position to one of strength. The college has achieved this notwithstanding having to pay inner London salaries to staff to remain competitive. The college has achieved its current modest surplus by lower levels of investment in course materials, repairs and maintenance even though provision has expanded and students' achievements have increased. The college provides accurate and timely data for the local LSC. There is careful control of staffing costs centrally, but for other aspects of budget, expenditure is delegated to curriculum and cross-college managers. The monitoring of staff hours is good and room usage satisfactory. The college provides value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses
- high pass rates on access to science and mathematics courses
- wide range of provision meeting local needs.

Weaknesses

- very low pass rates for AS-level courses in 2003
- low pass rates for the GNVQ intermediate courses for the last three years
- too much unsatisfactory and insufficient good or better teaching
- some inadequate resources
- slow response by manager to deficiencies in the curriculum area.

Scope of provision

39. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in science and mathematics.

The range of courses meets the needs of students and the local communities well. Course include GCSE mathematics and human physiology and health, AS-level and GCE A-level biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics; GNVQ foundation and intermediate science and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) science, access to science and mathematics and courses for people returning to study in mathematics and science. Most AS-level and GCE A-level provision is offered through a partnership with the Islamic College for Advanced Studies. The GCSE mathematics courses are offered at all three college centres and at different times of the day and evening. The access course is offered full time over three days a week allowing students to meet their family and work commitments. The partnership with the Islamic College for Advanced Studies caters for the needs of under-represented groups, particularly young Muslim women. The range of courses the college offers allows students to progress both within the college and to HE. Of the 580 students studying mathematics and science, 53% are aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

40. Most retention rates are high and increased between 2002 and 2003. The access to science retention rate has increased steadily between 2001 and 2003, and in 2003 was 12% above the national average. In the last two year, the retention rate for the GNVQ intermediate science course has been at least 10% above the national average. Pass rates are low on all courses other than access to science and mathematics and GCE A-level chemistry. The pass rate for the access to mathematics and science course has increased over the last three years to 17% above the national average. Pass rates for AS-level biology, chemistry and mathematics in 2003 were considerably below the national average and have declined significantly between 2001 and 2003. The AS-level chemistry pass rate declined by nearly 50% from 2002 to 2003.

41. The standard of students' work is mostly satisfactory. Students' files are neat and well organised and make good use of colour and highlighting to show important points. During practical science lessons, students use apparatus competently and obtain accurate results. Access students are able to use and read burettes and handle pipettes with skill. In chemistry, students build chemical models and use these well to show how molecules react. In GCSE mathematics, students are able to describe the mean, mode and median and to use these efficiently to carry out calculations. Mathematics students use calculators effectively and some have good mental arithmetic skills. A number of students do not have sufficient knowledge to understand and describe parts of the subjects they are studying.

A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Step into science | 1 | No. of starts | 16 | 20 | 27 |
| | | % retention | 88 | 72 | 81 |
| | | % pass rate | 29 | 85 | 62 |
| GCSE mathematics | 2 | No. of starts | 134 | 162 | 155 |
| | | % retention | 76 | 81 | 74 |
| | | % pass rate | 43 | 47 | 35 |
| GNVQ intermediate science | 2 | No. of starts | 21 | 24 | 21 |
| | | % retention | 95 | 83 | 90 |
| | | % pass rate | 45 | 50 | 58 |
| AS-level chemistry | 3 | No. of starts | 52 | 39 | 38 |
| | | % retention | 87 | 92 | 93 |
| | | % pass rate | 82 | 83 | 35 |
| AS-level human biology | 3 | No. of starts | 37 | 38 | 38 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------|-----|----|----|
| | | % retention | 100 | 92 | 92 |
| | | % pass rate | 81 | 71 | 28 |
| GCE A2 chemistry | 3 | No. of starts | * | 50 | 21 |
| | | % retention | * | 92 | 95 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 78 | 80 |
| Access to mathematics and science | 3 | No. of starts | 41 | 29 | 34 |
| | | % retention | 76 | 76 | 88 |
| | | % pass rate | 81 | 82 | 87 |

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

42. Teaching in a significant minority of lessons is unsatisfactory and there is insufficient teaching that is good or better. Teaching for adult students is better than for students aged 16 to 18. Where teaching is good, teachers give clear instructions, are supportive, ask effective questions to check learning, value students' answers and use a variety of activities to motivate and interest students. These include practical work, demonstration, group work, discussion, model building and calculations. Students in these lessons work in a diligent and enthusiastic manner. All courses have detailed schemes of work and lesson plans. Where there is unsatisfactory teaching, lessons are poorly organised and fail to take account of individual learning needs. In too many lessons, teachers talk too quickly from the front and fail to check that students understand what they are learning. Rather than developing students' own learning skills, they give the correct answer faster than they should and move on without explaining the topic they are discussing.

43. Teaching staff and technicians are appropriately qualified. There is good technical support for lessons. Equipment is well maintained and classrooms at the Willesden centre are comfortable and attractive. Some accommodation is inadequate for teaching AS-level and GCE A-level qualifications. The accommodation at the Islamic College for Advanced Studies restricts the styles of teaching. The lack of desks makes it difficult for students to use calculators, refer to notes and record answers on question papers. The laboratory at the Islamic College of Advanced Studies is too small for the number of students. The physics laboratory at the Willesden centre is old fashioned and unattractive and there is little of the students' work on display.

44. There is regular accurate assessment of students' work, mostly making use of awarding body marking criteria. The marking and assessment of students' work on GNVQ, AVCE and access courses makes little reference to national marking criteria and has few comments for improvement.

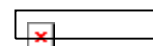
45. Students value the support provided by staff. Each student has an individual learning plan, which is used to provide learning targets. However, there is insufficient analysis on what is actually required to meet the target successfully, for instance, for the large number of foundation and intermediate students with aspirations to study medicine. The partnership with the Islamic College for Advanced Studies provides young Muslim women with an environment which their parents consider takes account of their cultural and religious requirements.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Managers are slow to respond to weaknesses in the curriculum area. These include declining pass rates, assignments failing to meet awarding body standards and significant increases in student numbers. The college has actions to resolve these issues but it is too early to judge if these are successful. For example, the particularly low pass rate for AS level in 2002/03 was due to the college with its partner the Islamic College for Advanced

Studies enrolling students with low achievement at GCSE on AS-level courses. The college did not provide sufficient additional support for many of these students to achieve an AS-level qualification. The self-assessment process focuses on the strengths of the curriculum area rather than recognising and resolving weaknesses. Where action plans have been put in place, these are not being rigorously monitored. Curriculum teams hold regular team meetings.

Construction



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Contributory grade for plumbing **outstanding (grade 1)**

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for plumbing and level 1 painting and decorating courses in 2003
- good teaching and learning, particularly for plumbing
- good specialist resources for most subjects
- very wide range of courses to meet employers' and students' needs
- good support for students
- highly effective links with employers
- effective management of work-based learning.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on intermediate construction awards

- declining and low pass rate for one-year electrical installation part 2
- low achievement of framework qualifications for work-based learning
- unsatisfactory resources for wood occupations.

Scope of provision

47. The two CoVEs for this area are in refrigeration, air conditioning and electrical installation and in construction provision. A very wide range of courses is available in all areas of construction and at all levels. These courses meet the needs of students and industry locally, regionally and nationally particularly well. There are good opportunities to progress to HE. The college offers craft and technician provision on a full-time and part-time basis, during the day and evening, including Saturday mornings, and through short courses. Courses lead to NVQ, national diplomas and certificates and other vocational qualifications. There are 361 students on full-time courses and 1,900 on part-time courses. Some 80% of students are adults. The 140 work-based learners include 30 advanced modern apprenticeships with the remainder on foundation modern apprentices. There are 48 students aged 14 to 16 from local schools.

Achievement and standards

48. Most pass and retention rates are high. Plumbing pass and retention rates from level 1 to level 3 were above the national average in 2003 and pass rates have increased by at least 10% from 2002. The pass rates for the City and Guilds 6988 basic plumbing skills in 2003 have increased significantly from a very low level in 2002 to 8% above the average. The pass rate for the City and Guilds 6052 painting and decorating courses, although declining significantly from 2001 to 2002, increased to 20% above the national average in 2003. The pass rates for two qualifications linked to the CoVEs have declined between 2002 and 2003. These are NVQ small commercial refrigeration and air conditioning systems at level 3, and the City and Guilds 2360-08 electrical installation part 2. The pass rate for the intermediate construction awards has increased significantly from a very low figure but remains 17% below the national average. Over the last five years, only 13% of work-based learners have completed their programme of learning successfully. However, since the summer of 2003, achievement of framework qualifications and units has increased and learners are starting to complete their key skills qualifications.

49. Students are highly motivated. In most lessons, they are enthusiastic and particularly interested in the subject. Many undertake additional courses. The standard of most students' work, including those covered by CoVE status, is high and meets the standard required by industry. Occupational skills are a strength. The skills in plumbing are very good and exceed the requirements of the national qualifications. For example, plumbing students are able to complete complex work, which includes the multiple bending and connection of low carbon steel pipe. In refrigeration and air-conditioning lessons, students are able to effectively diagnose faults with refrigeration units and accurately set cut-out and cut-in pressures using compound gauges. Students' portfolios of evidence are satisfactory or better. Students' attendance during the inspection week was good, at 82%.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
|---------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------|-----|-----|-----|
| City and Guilds 6052 painting and decorating | 1 | No. of starts | 47 | 68 | 73 |
| | | % retention | 68 | 74 | 84 |
| | | % pass rate | 81 | 54 | 75 |
| City and Guilds 6988 basic plumbing skills | 1 | No. of starts | * | 147 | 287 |
| | | % retention | * | 82 | 87 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 18 | 61 |
| Intermediate construction awards | 2 | No. of starts | * | 63 | 142 |
| | | % retention | * | 17 | 38 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 18 | 45 |
| NVQ mechanical engineering services - plumbing | 2 | No. of starts | 268 | 191 | 106 |
| | | % retention | 68 | 46 | 89 |
| | | % pass rate | 60 | 57 | 74 |
| NVQ mechanical engineering services - small commercial refrigeration and air conditioning systems | 2 | No. of starts | 158 | 121 | 108 |
| | | % retention | 50 | 50 | 52 |
| | | % pass rate | 71 | 69 | 63 |
| City and Guilds 2360-08 electrical installation part 2 theory and practice (one year) | 2 | No. of starts | 82 | 79 | 96 |
| | | % retention | 91 | 71 | 84 |
| | | % pass rate | 51 | 45 | 39 |
| NVQ mechanical engineering services plumbing (two years) | 3 | No. of starts | 23 | 37 | 50 |
| | | % retention | 52 | 59 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 42 | 64 | 74 |
| NVQ mechanical engineering services - small commercial refrigeration and air conditioning systems (one year) | 3 | No. of starts | 28 | 33 | 31 |
| | | % retention | 96 | 100 | 71 |
| | | % pass rate | 56 | 82 | 59 |

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

Quality of education and training

50. Just under two-thirds of teaching is good or better, including that for CoVE provision. No teaching is unsatisfactory. The best teaching is in plumbing, where most of the teaching and all the learning are good or better. The teaching for practical lessons and adults is good. The teaching of theory and for students aged 16 to 18 is less effective. There is careful planning of teaching. Teachers use good practical projects to maintain students' interest and extend their knowledge. Good use is made of learning materials, which take account of students' individual learning needs. In practical lessons, teachers carefully question students to check their knowledge of theory. This was particularly evident in a plumbing lesson where, after very good work with pipes by students, the teacher asked some very pertinent questions to link the completed practical activity to the relevant theory. Very occasionally, teaching is less effective. In a theory lesson, the teacher did not provide sufficient help to students with individual assignments. There is effective co-ordination of work-based on-the-job and off-the-job learning. Employers are successful at strengthening work-based learners' occupational skills in the workplace from the training provided at college.

51. The resources for most of the CoVE provision, including air-conditioning, refrigeration, electrical

installation and plumbing and trowel trades, are of a high standard. The good ILT facilities include materials on the college intranet and electronic whiteboards. The layout of workshops in carpentry and joinery is unsatisfactory. Woodworking machines are sited too close to workbenches and do not have dust extraction. Some woodworking machines are not in operation, as they do not comply with current regulations. Staff have appropriate industrial experience and hold appropriate assessor and verifier qualifications.

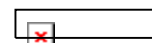
52. Assessment and verification are mostly effective. There is good planning of assessment to meet the needs of students. For example, students on electrical installations courses are able to book assessments on Saturday mornings. Assessment practice is less effective in plumbing, where written assessment decisions for unsuccessful candidates are not clear.

53. Students and work-based learners receive good support from tutors and employers. Students particularly value this support. There is initial assessment to identify learning support needs and learning support is offered if appropriate. Effective additional support is provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those requiring help with literacy, language and numeracy. To improve retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 there are additional individual and group guidance sessions on issues which prevent regular attendance and retention.

Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are good. Managers use the resources of the CoVEs to provide good provision, accommodation and equipment of a high standard, apart from in wood occupations, and to develop programmes which closely meet the needs of industry. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Many students are from particularly hard-to-reach groups, such as the traveller community. After the completion of the reorganisation of work-based learning in the summer of 2003, management of this area is now good. There are clear lines of responsibility and a much tighter focus on learning and achievement. Stronger links with employers provide good work placements and help develop the curriculum to take account of the latest techniques from industry. The self-assessment process involves all staff. It identified most of the key strengths but few of the weaknesses.

Engineering



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high and increasing pass rates on most courses

- good student progression

- good teaching and learning

- good liaison with industry which benefits learners

- wide range of programmes.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on many courses
- unsatisfactory punctuality in most lessons
- insufficient monitoring of students' progress by course teams.

Scope of provision

55. The wide range of engineering provision meets the needs of industry and students well. Provision includes manufacturing, automobile, electrical and computerised systems engineering courses and is available from entry to level 4. Courses are available on a full-time and part-time basis and during the day and evening. Some courses have entry points throughout the year. There is a range of short courses for industry including welding code training and assessment programmes. The college is part of a CoVE partnership in welding and fabrication with two other colleges and a national provider. There are 1,620 students, of whom around one-eighth are full time. Some 78% of students are aged over 19 years of age but only 3% are female. There are 6 work-based learners and 61 students aged 14 to 16 studying engineering.

Achievement and standards

56. Most pass rates are high and increasing. Between 2001 and 2003, the pass rate for the vehicle restoration course increased by over 30% to 13% above the national average. Pass rates for two other courses leading to the City and Guilds 2240 electronics servicing one-year course and the City and Guilds 3267-03 introductory welding skills oxy-acetylene short course, part of the CoVE provision, have also increased to well above the national average. However, the pass rate for the City and Guilds 2301-4 computer-aided engineering competencies part 2 for the last three years has stayed below the national average. Retention rates on many courses have remained low from 2001 to 2003. Particularly low was the retention rates for students on the NVQ vehicle maintenance and repair course, where around two-thirds of students left early. The achievement of framework qualifications for work-based learners is very low.

57. Many students on engineering courses are from areas of high deprivation, whose first language is not English and from groups under-represented in FE. During their time at college, these students make significant progress to bring them to a satisfactory standard of attainment and to progress to higher level courses, HE and employment. The standard of students' practical work is mostly satisfactory to good. For example, students on welding courses make good progress and are able to produce high standard welded joints within a few weeks of the start of their course. Most lessons suffer from unsatisfactory punctuality of students.

A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| City and Guilds 3267-03 introductory welding skills oxy-acetylene (short course) | 1 | No. of starts | 45 | 109 | 361 |
| | | % retention | 89 | 95 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 70 | 89 | 86 |
| NVQ in vehicle maintenance and repair (two year) | 2 | No. of starts | 109 | 90 | 95 |
| | | % retention | 31 | 40 | 34 |
| | | % pass rate | 68 | 50 | 56 |
| City and Guilds 2301-4 computer-aided engineering competencies part 2 cad (one year) | 2 | No. of starts | 92 | 47 | 44 |
| | | % retention | 78 | 85 | 73 |
| | | % pass rate | 63 | 70 | 69 |
| Vehicle restoration skills | 2 | No. of starts | 82 | 88 | 50 |
| | | % retention | 51 | 67 | 70 |
| | | % pass rate | 66 | 88 | 97 |
| National diploma in engineering (two year) | 3 | No. of starts | 25 | 15 | 17 |
| | | % retention | 44 | 60 | 53 |
| | | % pass rate | 82 | 67 | 78 |
| City and Guilds 2240 electronics servicing (one year) | 3 | No. of starts | 86 | 120 | 100 |
| | | % retention | 86 | 81 | 69 |
| | | % pass rate | 53 | 69 | 75 |

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

Quality of education and training

58. Most teaching and learning in engineering is good, including that for CoVE provision. The standard of teaching for practical work is better than that for theory work. Teaching and learning for students aged 16 to 18 and for adults are of a similar standard. No teaching or learning is unsatisfactory. The planning for most courses and lessons is effective. Schemes of work and lesson plans follow a standard format and take careful account of students' individual learning needs. There is a strong emphasis on health and safety in lessons. Students receive good individual support from their teachers. Teachers make regular checks on learning through effective questioning and are good at relating college work to industry. They make good use of students' own experiences to illustrate theory. Many teachers demonstrate work that is of a high standard and challenge their students to produce work of the same quality. In most instances, there is effective integration of key skills with vocational subjects. There is good use of ILT to support learning. In an electronics lesson, students used the Internet to source and price electronic components, and in a motor vehicle lesson, to provide information for a theory subject. Most lessons make effective use of learning support workers. In one lesson, a signer worked closely with a motor vehicle teacher to interpret the content of a lesson for two students. Teachers do not challenge sufficiently students' lack of punctuality.

59. Engineering teachers are vocationally well qualified and most have or are studying for teacher and assessor awards. Technicians make a good contribution to the students' learning in practical lessons. Accommodation is mostly satisfactory and is effectively maintained. Accommodation and equipment for the CoVE fabrication and welding provision is of an appropriate standard. Engineering has a wide range of electronic and ILT equipment. Equipment for computer-aided design is good and uses the latest of software. Equipment in the crash repair and vehicle spraying areas is of a high standard. Some workshops have untidy areas and a few classrooms do not provide a stimulating environment for learning. Machine tools and motor vehicle fitting areas are dated. The learning

resource centre has a wide range of textbooks, videos and CD-ROMs. Employers' resources for work-based learners are satisfactory and they train them using modern equipment in safe working environments.

60. Assessment is thorough and accurate. Students on full-time and substantial part-time courses and modern apprentices are initially assessed for literacy, language and numeracy support. Some feedback to students after assessment is inadequate and does not provide sufficient information for students to progress effectively. Although verification is effective, there is little written feedback to assessors from internal verifiers.

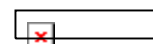
61. The good links with industry benefit both students and members of staff. Motor vehicle teachers have access to training and experience with companies who sponsor learning at the college to maintain and update their industrial skills, and students are provided with a wide range of materials and the opportunity to be trained with the latest equipment.

62. Guidance and support for students is satisfactory. Students have regular group tutorials. Individual tutorials are carried out during workshop lessons. Teachers and students discuss progression and attainment during the individual tutorials. Learning support staff regularly join lessons to provide effective additional support for students. Work-based learners receive good levels of support from their employers and receive regular progress review visits from college staff.

Leadership and management

63. Leadership and management are good, including that for CoVE provision. The comprehensive quality assurance arrangements include a useful programme of course reviews but these do not take sufficient account of the results of the discussions of student focus groups. Teachers are fully involved in the self-assessment process. There are effective programmes of development to meet staff training needs and good opportunities for technical updating. Managers have put into operation a good system for monitoring students' attendance and are developing actions to resolve unsatisfactory attendance. At the time of the inspection, these actions have not been effective. There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities but little monitoring of work-based learners' employers' arrangements for this area. Course teams meet regularly. However, these meetings focus on operational matters rather than monitoring and discussing standards of teaching and learning and students' performance and progress.

Business administration, management and professional



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good development of students' personal and learning skills
- thorough planning of learning
- good support for students

- thorough curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some courses
- unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality
- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- insufficient links with employers for full-time accounting students.

Scope of provision

64. The college offers an appropriate range of courses from level 1 to level 4. These include GNVQ intermediate business, AVCE and access to HE, which is offered in business studies and accounting. In 2002, as a replacement for the full-time NVQ administration course, the college introduced the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA examinations (OCR) certificate in administration at levels 1, 2 and 3. The college offers the Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) certificate for legal secretaries as a full-time course. There are NVQ courses in accounting at levels 2, 3 and 4 for full-time and part-time students. Part-time courses for professional development awards in management and the certificate in personnel practice are available in the afternoon and evening. There are popular evening short courses in book-keeping and accounts, and in computerised accounting. The college works with the Islamic College for Advanced Studies to provide a GCE in business studies. There is a small programme of Jobcentre Plus provision in administration. There are a total of 480 students, of whom 415 are adults and 65 are students aged 16 to 18, and there are 14 Jobcentre Plus clients.

Achievement and standards

65. Most pass rates are around the national average. There are low pass rates on some courses. The pass rate for the GNVQ intermediate business, although around the national average, has seen a significant increase from the extremely low pass rate in 2001. The pass rate for NVQ accounting at level 3 has declined significantly over the last three years to 22% below the national average in 2003. On the access to business course, in 2003, out of 16 students who started the course only six achieved the qualification. The access to accounting course has been more successful. Of the 15 students who completed the course, 14 gained the qualification. The pass rate for the legal secretaries' certificate was outstanding in 2003. The pass rate for this award has increased significantly from 2001 to 2003, but the retention rate in the same period declined by 30% to well below the national average. Retention rates are around the average, apart from those on the GNVQ intermediate and the legal secretaries' certificate courses in 2003. Few clients on Jobcentre Plus courses progress to work. Between 2001 and 2004, only 14% secured a job.

66. The standard of most students' work is satisfactory or better and they make appropriate progress compared with their prior levels of attainment. Students develop good personal and learning skills.

Students have good oral skills and make confident contributions to class discussions. Full-time business and administration students effectively use their ICT skills in practical work. Higher level students use their skills of independent research and analysis to good effect in assignment work. Students work well in groups and are supportive of each other in their learning. Students' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. In lessons observed during the inspection, only two-thirds of students attended regularly and most lessons had late arrivals disrupting learning.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration, management and professional, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Computerised accounting short | 1 | No. of starts | 113 | 128 | 105 |
| | | % retention | 100 | 95 | 88 |
| | | % pass rate | 63 | 67 | 68 |
| GNVQ intermediate business | 2 | No. of starts | 46 | 20 | 18 |
| | | % retention | 59 | 95 | 67 |
| | | % pass rate | 4 | 58 | 58 |
| NVQ accounting | 2 | No. of starts | 105 | 95 | 69 |
| | | % retention | 84 | 87 | 78 |
| | | % pass rate | 68 | 53 | 69 |
| Legal secretaries' certificate | 2 | No. of starts | 19 | 16 | 17 |
| | | % retention | 95 | 88 | 65 |
| | | % pass rate | 67 | 79 | 100 |
| NVQ accounting | 3 | No. of starts | 47 | 86 | 50 |
| | | % retention | 83 | 98 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 51 | 42 | 37 |
| Access to business studies | 3 | No. of starts | 28 | 24 | 16 |
| | | % retention | 86 | 96 | 75 |
| | | % pass rate | 79 | 57 | 50 |

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

Quality of education and training

67. Teaching and learning in most lessons are satisfactory and none is unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning for adults is of a higher standard than for students aged 16 to 18. Teachers plan and organise learning thoroughly. Schemes of work are comprehensive and lesson plans are good. Course and teacher files are good and there is a consistent approach to the organisation of learning. In most lessons, teachers provide a range of appropriate learning activities and carefully monitor students to ensure that activities meet all learning needs. Where the teaching is less effective, it is uninspiring and occasionally there is insufficient checking of learning. Links with employers for accounting students are insufficient. The college offers accounting courses at NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4 on a full-time basis for unemployed adults. There is no external work experience arranged for these students, or other opportunities to provide learning which relates to current industrial practice.

68. Most resources are satisfactory. ILT resources are good. Staff are increasingly using interactive whiteboards and digital projectors to improve learning. In a book-keeping lesson, the teacher used the technology to demonstrate effectively double entry book-keeping. The college's intranet is available to students when they are away from college. Staff are well qualified and experienced. At

the Wembley centre, some accommodation is noisy and students' facilities are poor.

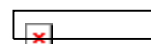
69. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress and internal verification are satisfactory. Students have a clear understanding of the assessment process. Homework is regularly set. Teachers return marked work promptly with constructive feedback, which clearly identifies how students can improve.

70. Support for students is good. The effective tutorial programme includes personal and general guidance, advice and career education. Teachers are sensitive to the individual students' needs and provide support outside of lessons. They provide additional workshop and individual subject support. Literacy tutors work effectively with subject teachers to provide support, both in the classroom and in discrete literacy lessons. There is good additional support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The use of individual learning plans is ineffective. Many plans are incomplete and fail to use results of initial assessment to set appropriate targets for progress. Arrangements for the review of students' progress are satisfactory although targets are not sufficiently specific and do not link to individual learning plans.

Leadership and management

71. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. Management has a clear focus on raising standards. Communications are good and staff clearly understand their roles. Effective consultation and partnerships with business, local schools and community groups ensures courses meet the needs of students and the local communities. Good use of management information helps in making decisions and the setting and monitoring of targets. Comprehensive curriculum reviews make good use of feedback from students and staff. Rigorous self-assessment provides an accurate assessment of performance. Staff are clear about what they need to do to improve standards. Managers have implemented a range of strategies to increase retention and pass rates. For example, all students now receive initial basic skills assessments and these, with stronger literacy, numeracy and language support, are leading to better attainment. Attendance and punctuality remain unsatisfactory, although recently introduced procedures and an increase in the number of tutors are beginning to make an improvement. Better procedures for lesson observations have raised teaching standards. Staff development and training is good. There is strong promotion of equal opportunities. All staff receive regular equal opportunities training and are sensitive to diversity in lessons.

Information and communications technology



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on CLAIT and GNVQ intermediate courses in 2003

- high retention rates on the European computer driving license (ECDL) course

- good teaching and learning

- good resources to support provision
- wide range of courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on national certificate in computing and AS-level computing
- low and declining retention rates for national certificate in computing
- unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality
- unsatisfactory industrial links for students and staff
- insufficient awareness of health and safety.

Scope of provision

72. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses from pre-entry to level 4 which meet the needs of students and the local community well. As well as daytime and evening courses, the college adjusts timetables to take account of students with family and care commitments. The college offers provision at its three centres and in the community. Students can work towards a range of qualifications including AVCE, NVQ, GNVQ, CLAIT, ECDL, integrated business technology (IBT) and other vocational awards. Some ICT courses are offered alongside ESOL provision to take account of the large number of students whose first language is not English. There are 415 students aged 16 to 18 and 1,499 adult students. Most of the students aged 16 to 18 are full time and most of the adult students are part time.

Achievement and standards

73. Pass and retention rates for ICT are variable. The pass rates for CLAIT and GNVQ intermediate courses have increased significantly from 2001 to 2003, when both were 14% above the national average. The pass rate for the national certificate in computing has seen a major increase on the very low figure in 2001, but the rate is still 10% below the national average. The pass rate for AS-level computing has declined by nearly 40% from 2001 to 2003 and is now significantly below the national average. The retention rates for ECDL courses in 2002 and 2003 were high and at least 10% above the national average. However, the retention rate for the national certificate in computing has remained low for the last three years and in 2003 was significantly below the national average.

74. Most students' work is satisfactory and they make sound progress compared to their previous levels of attainment. The standard of students' attainment in lessons for those aged 16 to 18 is much better than for adults. In the best lessons, students are attentive and motivated. For example, students on a multimedia development course produced impressive displays which made very good use of the software in innovative and sophisticated ways. Students' written work is satisfactory and portfolios of evidence are generally organised effectively. Students' vocational skills meet the standards required by industry. Most students are interested in their studies, although attendance is unsatisfactory. Over one-third of students do not attend regularly and lessons are often disrupted by the late arrival of students.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|------------------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| CLAIT (short) | 1 | No. of starts | 291 | 364 | 62 |
| | | % retention | 92 | 95 | 79 |
| | | % pass rate | 29 | 36 | 78 |
| ECDL | 2 | No. of starts | 24 | 283 | 177 |
| | | % retention | 67 | 92 | 91 |
| | | % pass rate | 31 | 78 | 58 |
| GNVQ intermediate ICT | 2 | No. of starts | 43 | 56 | 43 |
| | | % retention | 88 | 78 | 81 |
| | | % pass rate | 55 | 45 | 80 |
| National certificate in computer studies | 3 | No. of starts | 49 | 43 | 42 |
| | | % retention | 39 | 35 | 24 |
| | | % pass rate | 5 | 74 | 70 |
| AVCE computing and precursors | 3 | No. of starts | 94 | 24 | 40 |
| | | % retention | 52 | 54 | 65 |
| | | % pass rate | 63 | 82 | 81 |
| AS-level computing (one year) | 3 | No. of starts | 31 | 29 | 45 |
| | | % retention | 100 | 90 | 82 |
| | | % pass rate | 68 | 46 | 30 |

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

Quality of education and training

75. Teaching and learning are good in most lessons. Most of the teaching in lessons is good or better for students aged 16 to 18 and none is unsatisfactory. For adult students, around half the teaching in lessons is good or better. Most lessons are well planned and organised. There are appropriately detailed and effective schemes of work and lesson plans. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of good teaching and learning approaches to maintain interest and to develop students' learning skills. Staff make effective use of team teaching. For example, one teacher explained a concept in ICT while the other teacher provided individual support to those who found the concept difficult to understand. Teachers make good use of questions to check learning and to involve and motivate students. In the less effective lessons, teachers spend too much time talking without developing students' knowledge and understanding of a subject.

76. Teachers are well qualified and have an appropriate range of experience. There are good ICT

resources. Machines are well laid out to support learning. Computers are modern and are updated or replaced on a regular basis. ICT classrooms are equipped with the latest interactive whiteboards, multimedia projectors and software. Teachers use ICT particularly effectively in lessons. For example, a teacher used an interactive whiteboard very effectively to help students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to understand basic word processing functions. There is insufficient account taken of health and safety. For example, chairs are not adjusted to maintain good posture, there is no regular resting to reduce eyestrain and prevent repetitive strain injury. Some of the smaller ICT rooms are too warm and inadequately ventilated.

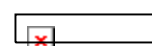
77. There is effective initial assessment to place students on the most suitable course. The monitoring of students' progress is effective. Assessment is accurate and valid with sound arrangements for internal verifications. Students are provided with a clear calendar of assessment dates scheduled evenly across their programme of learning. Tutors check progress against short-term learning targets but sometimes they do not record this information.

78. Students receive appropriate support. There are effective arrangements to identify and provide additional support for students. For example, a signer supports students with a hearing impairment in lessons and there are specialist keyboards for students with disabilities. There is an established and satisfactory tutorial system. Students receive thorough careers guidance including curriculum vitae writing and interview skills.

Leadership and management

79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications are clear. There are established arrangements for course reviews. Managers use pass and retention rates to develop and change courses. There is an extensive and effective staff appraisal and development programme. Staff are observed on an annual basis and the results are used to inform their personal development plans through the appraisal process. However, there are insufficient opportunities for staff to upgrade their technical skills. The promotion of equality of opportunity is strong. Managers, in planning courses and teaching, are sensitive to the cultural and religious needs of the many different local communities. Links with industry are inadequate. This prevents the curriculum being developed to take account of current industrial practice, and limits the provision of work experience.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on NVQ hairdressing and beauty therapy courses at level 3
- high retention rates on most courses
- high standards of students' practical work
- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on NVQ level 1 hairdressing and part-time beauty therapy courses
- insufficient use of ILT in teaching and learning
- unsatisfactory management and use of data
- unsatisfactory accommodation in one of the beauty therapy salons.

Scope of provision

80. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. The college offers hairdressing courses from level 1 to 3. There is also a full-time hairdressing course for ESOL students. There are 75 full-time hairdressing students but no part-time provision. Some 40% of students are aged 16 to 18. There are full-time courses in beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3 and part-time courses in holistic therapies. There are 81 full-time and 161 part-time students studying beauty therapy, of which 25% are aged 16 to 18. Some 25 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attending hairdressing courses at the college.

Achievement and standards

81. The pass rates for hairdressing and beauty therapy courses at NVQ level 3 in 2003 were very high and significantly above the national average. Particularly strong have been the pass rates for NVQ level 3 hairdressing, where in 2001 and 2003 the pass rate was 100%. The pass rates on the NVQ hairdressing level 1 course has declined by over 20% between 2002 and 2003 to significantly below the national average. The pass rate on the manicure and pedicure certificate and the body massage diploma were at least 35% below the national average. Most retention rates in 2003 have remained above the national average although there has been decline on some courses. The retention rates for NVQ beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3 have increased by around 10% from 2002 to 2003 to significantly above the national average and for NVQ hairdressing at level 3, the retention rate was outstanding at 100% in 2003.

82. Students' practical work is good. They make good progress compared to their prior levels attainment to develop vocational skills to a commercial standard. Students have neat and precise hand co-ordination, which allows them to carry out their work at commercial speed and provide clients with treatments of a high professional standard. In one NVQ level 1 hairdressing lesson, students could blow dry long hair with confidence to provide clients with a high standard of service. Students' written work is satisfactory and portfolios of evidence are mostly well organised. Students have been consistently successful in local and regional hairdressing competitions, particularly for African-Caribbean hairstyles. Magazines specialising in African-Caribbean hair have shown students' work.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| NVQ hairdressing | 1 | No. of starts | * | 36 | 61 |
| | | % retention | * | 94 | 77 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 79 | 57 |
| Manicure and pedicure certificate (short) | 2 | No. of starts | 31 | 48 | 42 |
| | | % retention | 100 | 83 | 95 |
| | | % pass rate | 42 | 55 | 45 |
| NVQ beauty therapy | 2 | No. of starts | 32 | 39 | 38 |
| | | % retention | 75 | 77 | 89 |
| | | % pass rate | 96 | 67 | 76 |
| NVQ beauty therapy | 3 | No. of starts | 19 | 20 | 32 |
| | | % retention | 89 | 85 | 94 |
| | | % pass rate | 82 | 88 | 90 |
| Body massage diploma | 3 | No. of starts | 32 | 21 | 33 |
| | | % retention | 69 | 95 | 79 |
| | | % pass rate | 59 | 55 | 65 |

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

83. Teaching for adult students is better than that for students aged 16 to 18. Teaching in practical lessons is mostly good. For example, in a practical lesson for NVQ level 2 hairdressing, students worked to a high commercial standard. Students practice on a variety of both European and African-Caribbean hair treatments. Students completed a variety of treatments and created fashionable hairstyles. In a reflexology lesson, students used a mixture of blended oils for the first time. The students enjoyed the lesson and acquired new skills supported by good written instructions. Students regularly visit trade shows and exhibitions to see the latest developments in hairdressing styles. Most theory lessons are uninspiring. In these lessons' teachers do not involve students effectively in the learning. There is insufficient use of ILT even though there are interactive whiteboards in most classrooms. Teachers have developed high-quality learning materials for students to use during their course, either at or away from the college.

84. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in teaching and in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Resources for hairdressing are satisfactory. However, they are starting to look out of date and worn. The resources for beauty therapy in the main salon are satisfactory. However, the smaller training salon is unsatisfactory and not of a commercial standard. There is no water supply and when the salon is in use, there is insufficient room for students and clients.

85. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are effective. However, there is insufficient written evaluation on formative assessment and assignments to provide students with effective guidance on how to progress. The accreditation of prior achievement is unsatisfactory. For example, a student had worked in a youth centre learning techniques for treatments for black people's hair but teachers did not consider this when planning the programme of learning. There are comprehensive internal verification arrangements.

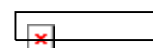
86. Students receive good vocational and pastoral support. All students have individual and group tutorials. Students speak highly of staff and feel able to approach staff at any time to discuss

problems. All full-time students receive an initial assessment and complete an individual learning plan. However, these plans do not contain short-term or long-term learning targets. Learning support is good. This is offered to all students who are identified as needing support and is part of students' programmes of learning. For example, in a lesson to meet the numeracy support needs of adult hairdressing ESOL students, the teacher had produced clearly written learning materials to explain the calculations being taught. There was good use of the whiteboard and small-group work to allow the particularly enthusiastic students to make good progress during the lesson. Students have access to a hardship fund to help with buying equipment, childcare and travel. However, students who enrol late do not always have prompt access to the fund.

Leadership and management

87. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good staff development to improve teaching skills. The college supports teachers effectively to gain professional teaching qualifications. However, full-time staff do not take the opportunity to update their vocational skills. There are thorough quality assurance arrangements. Self-assessment is accurate and comprehensive. Actions to resolve weaknesses are starting to improve provision. However, the use of data about pass and retention rates is unsatisfactory. Curriculum managers do not take responsibility for data and do not use it effectively to monitor and improve students' performance. There is strong promotion of equality of opportunity and a curriculum which takes account of the students' cultural backgrounds.

Health and social care



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good achievement on most courses
- significant progress made by mature students
- good teaching
- effective support for students.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory punctuality
- insufficient use of ILT.

Scope of provision

88. There is an appropriate range of courses for full-time students in childcare, health and social care. There is provision for part-time students in counselling, early years, health and social care and pre-school practice. There are 39 students aged 16 to 18 and 149 adult students following full-time courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Courses include AVCE; Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma, certificate and foundation courses, first and national diplomas in care; access and pre-access to professional studies in care; and foundation and GNVQ intermediate health and social care. There are 244 adult students and a small number of students aged 16 to 18 following part-time courses in counselling, the CACHE certificate and diploma in pre-school practice and a certificate in mental health. There are 16 work-based learners on programmes leading to NVQ caring for children and young people at level 3 and NVQ early years care and education at level 3.

Achievement and standards

89. There are high and improving pass rates on most courses, with significant progress being made by mature students, including many who do not have English as their first language, or who have returned to study after long periods away from education. Pass rates on the certificate in childcare and education and GNVQ intermediate health and social care are well above national averages. Measures taken to improve advice, guidance and attendance have resulted in improved retention rates in 2003. The retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate health and social care course increased to 8% above the national average in 2003. The retention rate on the access to professional studies in care is outstanding, at 100%.

90. The standard of work produced in class is good and reflects the interest and care that students demonstrate in their lessons. Students are able to link theory to workplace practices well. For example, students on the diploma in pre-school practice were able to relate child protection issues to their experiences at work. Progression rates to study at higher levels and employment are good, and 83% of the students from the diploma in childcare and education went on to further courses or work in 2003. A large proportion of the students on the access to professional studies in care progressed to university or nursing. There is poor punctuality at the first lesson of the day, resulting in students missing the aims and objectives of the lesson. Students' attendance during the inspection was 78%.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health and social care, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|------------------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Foundation award in caring for children | 1 | No. of starts | * | 15 | ** |
| | | % retention | * | 87 | ** |
| | | % pass rate | * | 100 | ** |
| Certificate in childcare and education | 2 | No. of starts | 34 | 35 | 33 |
| | | % retention | 79 | 71 | 76 |
| | | % pass rate | 78 | 80 | 92 |
| First certificate in caring | 2 | No. of starts | * | ** | 17 |
| | | % retention | * | ** | 65 |
| | | % pass rate | * | ** | 73 |
| GNVQ intermediate health and social care | 2 | No. of starts | 33 | 34 | 25 |
| | | % retention | 82 | 59 | 84 |
| | | % pass rate | 37 | 70 | 86 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|---|---------------|----|----|-----|
| Access to professional studies in care | 3 | No. of starts | 75 | 82 | 50 |
| | | % retention | 76 | 78 | 100 |
| | | % pass rate | 88 | 92 | 82 |
| Diploma in childcare and education | 3 | No. of starts | * | 34 | 32 |
| | | % retention | * | 59 | 66 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 80 | 70 |

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course did not run

** less than 15 students

Quality of education and training

91. There is much good teaching. Teaching in two-thirds of lessons is good or better, and none less than satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and purposeful. Teachers share clear aims and objectives for lessons with students. These use a variety of effective teaching methods including case studies, visits and visiting speakers, although there is insufficient use of ILT to improve learning. In the better lessons, teachers identify preferred learning styles and modify their teaching methods to suit students' specific learning needs. Teachers check learning regularly and ensure that students whose first language is not English understand the terminology used. For example, in one lesson, the teacher asked students to put awarding body assessment criteria into their own words so they had a clearer understanding.

92. Teachers are vocationally well qualified and all have or are working towards a teaching qualification. Some have recent, relevant industrial experience and use good examples from this to help students learn effectively. For example, in a childcare class the teacher gave good practical advice on how to relate answers at job interviews to the age of the children in the particular setting. Students are employed or the college places them in a range of organisations to develop their understanding of health and social care. Students are able to share their experiences effectively in lessons. For example, in a lesson on care codes of practice, a student was able to relate her experiences on the boundaries of familiarity with clients. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively in lessons. In one lesson, students were making resources for the Chinese New Year to use in their workplace. There are good displays in classrooms promoting equality.

93. Accommodation is satisfactory. There are few computers in classrooms, although there is one specialist computer room. There is a good supply of resources for practical work. Learning materials are of a high standard. Large print handouts are available for students with visual impairments. The learning resources centre has a comprehensive range of books and there is a regular replacement programme. There are few videos for students to borrow.

94. Assessment of students' work is fair and accurate with supportive and constructive comments to help students improve. Teachers correct spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Work placement providers and employers contribute effectively to assessment on childcare courses.

95. There is a wide range of provision and progression opportunities. Links developed with local organisations have led to an expanding range of courses for part-time students, for example, NVQ caring for children and young people, and the certificate in mental health for the social services departments of two local authorities. The college is an active member of the local Early Years Development Partnership.

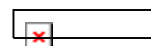
96. There is much effective support for students, which they appreciate. Weekly tutorials for all students address academic and personal needs. There are also high levels of support outside timetabled sessions and reference to specialist outside agencies when appropriate. Tutors discuss initial assessment results with students to determine their support needs. Learning assistants

provide additional individual support in lessons. Each student has as an individual learning plan and these are reviewed each term. Where there have been improvements, a card is sent to the student's home. There are no formal parents' evenings for students aged 16 to 18 but tutors contact parents if issues arise. There is good careers advice in lessons and in tutorials.

Leadership and management

97. Leadership and management are good. Teams meet regularly and student focus groups contribute to course review meetings. The self-assessment process is rigorous and realistic and involves all course teams. Managers and staff monitor progress against action plans regularly. There has been significant progress with the 2002/03 action plan. For example, managers have implemented a staff development programme and mentoring scheme for teachers, based on weaknesses identified during observations. Equality of opportunity is an integral part of the provision and staff promote it effectively through the curriculum.

Visual and performing arts and media



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Contributory grade for art, design and media is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- very good teaching and learning in performing arts
- good use of students' cultural and religious backgrounds
- high standard of work by clothing and garment manufacture students
- high retention rates on some courses
- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on some art, design and media courses
- unsatisfactory punctuality and attendance

- insufficient good teaching in art, design and media
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

98. There is a wide range of courses including: first diploma courses in media, design and performing arts; access courses in media and communications, and theatre; national diploma courses in fashion, graphic design, media and performing arts; open college courses in fashion and clothing craft, clothing manufacture, interior design and upholstery; and AS-level and GCE A-level photography. There are 196 full-time students, of whom 92 are aged 16 to 18 and 104 are adults. There are 253 part-time students, the majority of whom are adults. The curriculum area is split into three areas: art, design and media, with 137 students; fashion, clothing and photography, with 204 students; and performing arts with 108 students.

Achievement and standards

99. The college recruits many students with low GCSE grades or without formal qualifications, which leads to groups with a wide range of learning needs. The standard of work on some first-year courses is low, but the progress made by students in terms of personal achievement and skills development is good. Many progress to HE and employment. There are high retention and pass rates on fashion and clothing craft and manufacture courses, access courses and the national diploma in media. There are declining pass rates on AVCE art and design, GNVQ intermediate art and design and GNVQ intermediate media courses. The college has now replaced these courses by first diploma courses in media and design and national diploma courses in graphic design, which better meet local requirements. The AS-level and GCE A-level art and design courses at the college have had poor retention and pass rates. The late arrival of students disrupts many lessons and teachers do not always follow the college punctuality policy. Student attendance is unsatisfactory. In lessons observed during the inspection, only 60% of students attended lessons.

100. Performing arts students work independently from an early stage in their courses. The standard of students' work in clothing and garment manufacture is high, and students speak confidently about their improving pattern cutting and sewing skills. In one lesson, an Indian student was altering her bodice pattern to make a blouse to wear under a sari and others in the group began to compare European clothing with their own. Garments and students' files display a high level of sewing skills on a wide variety of fabrics. In media lessons, students are confident using computer software but their ideas lack creativity and originality and drawing skills for storyboards are not well developed. In some design lessons, students make slow progress with drawing and rely on copied images for design development.

A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts and media, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| GNVQ intermediate media | 2 | No. of starts | 20 | 16 | 15 |
| | | % retention | 90 | 75 | 80 |
| | | % pass rate | 44 | 25 | 50 |
| OCN fashion and clothing craft | 2 | No. of starts | ** | 32 | 22 |
| | | % retention | ** | 75 | 100 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------|----|----|----|
| | | % pass rate | ** | 75 | 95 |
| Access to media and communications | 3 | No. of starts | ** | 19 | 15 |
| | | % retention | ** | 89 | 87 |
| | | % pass rate | ** | 76 | 87 |
| | | | | | |

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

101. Teaching and learning in performing arts is very good. Teachers use a variety of methods to support students with a range of abilities. There is a fast pace in lessons and teachers motivate and develop students' enthusiasm for their subject particularly well. Regular and relevant homework is set and it is used well to support practical work. Teachers extend students' vocabulary and understanding and take time to explain new concepts carefully. For example, African-Caribbean students discussed a racist word used in a drama improvisation in the context of peer group language and the concept of apartheid. In another lesson, students explored the influence of mental states on physical behaviour by improvising a theatre siege. Students succeeded so well in portraying extremes of emotion that the group was transported imaginatively from a wet Monday morning in Willesden to a Russian theatre besieged by terrorists. Teachers make good use of students' cultural and religious backgrounds in teaching and learning. Project briefs include and highlight cultural diversity. For example, a project on the different types of festivals prompted wide-ranging discussion on how different cultures approach a festival. Performing arts productions cover a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Students respect the values and beliefs of others.

102. There is insufficient good teaching in art, design and media. Teaching methods do not meet the wide range of ability within the group. Teachers do not share aims and objectives with students, and there is insufficient development of drawing and evaluative skills. There is a lack of visual references at briefings for projects and students are rarely encouraged to look at the work of artists and designers. Question and answer sessions do not generate discussion or evaluation of work by the students.

103. Staff are well qualified, with a range of appropriate expertise, and part-time staff are practising designers and performers. There is good technical support. Accommodation and specialist resources are also good in most areas. ICT equipment and software is of a high standard. Performing arts accommodation is very good, with a sprung dance floor with mirrors, a theatre, lighting gallery and several rehearsal rooms. Accommodation for three-dimensional design activities is small and lacks storage space. This limits the scale and ambition of work on the first diploma in design course.

104. Assessment is well-planned in performing arts, fashion, clothing and media, but procedures for assessment in design are incomplete. The cancellation of assessments for the first diploma in design course meant that students were unaware of what progress they were making or where they need to improve. The feedback provided for students is good but the marking of some written work in media is over-generous. Individual learning plans have clear targets set by both students and staff. Teachers correct grammar and punctuation carefully in performing arts.

105. Students are placed on appropriate courses. The courses meet the needs of the local community and employers, particularly the garment craft and manufacture provision. There are good progression routes from part-time courses to full-time courses and from level 2 to level 3. Students progress well to HE, but progression to employment is not monitored effectively.

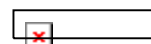
106. There is good support for students, who come with a range of individual learning and language skills and needs, as well as social and personal problems. Students value the support given by teaching and technical staff and are motivated to aim high in performing arts. There is good initial

screening and provision of additional learning support.

Leadership and management

107. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course teams are involved in writing the self-assessment report, but do not adequately monitor action plans. Course teams are increasingly working together to promote cross-curricular activity. For example, performing arts staff and students choreograph the fashion shows, while fashion students make costumes and textiles for theatre students. Course teams discuss retention and pass rates, but there are no minutes recording discussion and no action plans to resolve issues. Some staff implement the college policy to improve punctuality and attendance but curriculum managers do not monitor this carefully. The planning of assessment and internal verification is not consistent across the school. Good practice in teaching is not adequately shared.

English, modern languages, English as a foreign language and interpreting languages



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high retention rates on interpreting and GCSE English courses
- high pass rates on the community interpreting course
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses to meet the needs of the local community.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on some language courses
- low pass rates on GCSE foundation English and some language and EFL courses
- students' lack of punctuality

- insufficient use of ILT.

Scope of provision

108. The college offers a wide range of part-time day and evening courses from level 1 to level 4 in English, modern foreign languages, EFL and interpreting languages to meet the needs of the local community. Students come from a very wide range of ages and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. There are opportunities for progression across the provision. A wide range of languages is offered: foreign language courses are available in six languages, including Arabic and Irish, and interpreting courses cover thirteen languages, which include Arabic, Farsi, Polish and Russian. Courses are provided at the college's three centres and at a site in the community. In addition, the college offers a community interpreting course at venues in two neighbouring London boroughs. There are 234 students on foreign language courses ranging from beginners to advanced level, 196 on EFL courses and 161 on interpreting courses. There are also 188 students aged 16 to 18 on English GCSE or advanced level courses. Some 90% of students are adults.

Achievement and standards

109. Retention rates and pass rates vary across courses. There are high retention rates on interpreting and GCSE English courses, but low retention rates on some language courses, including the certificate of business language competence and GCSE French. Pass rates on the community interpreting course have been consistently high over the past three years. Pass rates on some EFL courses, such as some of those for the key English test and the preliminary English test, have been above national averages. However, pass rates on the GCSE foundation level English course and some language and EFL courses have declined over the past three years to below national averages.

110. Most students are able to communicate confidently and effectively in other languages at an appropriate level and many demonstrate good oral skills, especially on EFL and interpreting courses. Students have well-developed comprehension skills. Students on interpreting courses mostly display good bilingual skills and well-developed oral interpreting skills. Some achieve a high standard in their written work, displaying a clear grasp of appropriate language structures, a wide vocabulary and, at higher levels, good writing style. However, the standard of written work for many students is often lower than that of their oral work, revealing weaknesses in grammar, vocabulary and sometimes style. Some students' weak pronunciation and intonation detract from their oral fluency. Punctuality is unsatisfactory in a significant number of lessons and interrupts learning.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, modern languages, English as a foreign language and interpreting languages, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------|------|------|------|
| Certificate in business language competence (basic) | 1 | No. of starts | 141 | 99 | 104 |
| | | % retention | 64 | 58 | 55 |
| | | % pass rate | 20 | 61 | 35 |
| GCSE English | 2 | No. of starts | 92 | 72 | 118 |
| | | % retention | 72 | 68 | 84 |
| | | % pass rate | 74 | 45 | 48 |
| Community interpreting intermediate | 2 | No. of starts | 106 | 84 | 97 |
| | | % retention | 87 | 82 | 94 |
| | | % pass rate | 92 | 99 | 88 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---|---------------|-----|-----|----|
| Certificate in advanced English | 3 | No. of starts | 126 | 108 | 83 |
| | | % retention | 96 | 94 | 90 |
| | | % pass rate | 40 | 44 | 31 |
| Diploma in public services interpreting | 4 | No. of starts | 46 | 95 | 78 |
| | | % retention | 87 | 89 | 85 |
| | | % pass rate | 38 | 55 | 42 |

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

Quality of education and training

111. Much teaching and learning across the provision is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Students, who range in age as well as cultural and linguistic background, are well motivated and work collaboratively. Teachers establish a good-humoured, purposeful working atmosphere in lessons. The planning of lessons is effective. Schemes of work and lesson plans have clear learning objectives and are shared with students. In most lessons, teachers effectively manage a wide range of learning activities and teaching methods. For example, in an interpreting lesson, the teacher used a lively game with a group of students of differing levels of ability, resulting in effective and enthusiastic revision based on prompt cards. All members of the linguistically diverse group, including two students with disabilities, moved around the room to communicate with all their classmates. Learning materials are well constructed and are used successfully to promote learning. In most lessons, teachers give clear instructions and explanations of grammatical points, and continuously check students' understanding. In interpreting lessons, teachers give very good specialist advice to students regarding the development of their interpreting skills and terminology. In lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, students make insufficient progress and there is inadequate attention by teachers to the learning needs of all students. In a few lessons, there is ineffective time management.

112. Resources are adequate for teaching and learning and most teachers are well qualified and experienced. A minority of part-time teachers are working towards qualification or undergoing relevant training. Classroom accommodation is mostly suitable but there are poor acoustics in a few rooms. In some rooms, there is a lack of stimulating wall displays and examples of students' work. There is a satisfactory range of specialist equipment and good access to learning resource centres and ICT facilities. ILT is used insufficiently in lessons to support learning.

113. There is a comprehensive programme of initial assessment and induction, which places students on appropriate courses and identifies any additional learning support needs. Students' work is marked in detail and returned promptly with helpful feedback for improvement. Teachers monitor and record students' progress and on some courses teachers make use of individual learning plans, although these plans are not always used effectively.

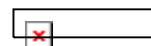
114. Specialist initial advice and guidance for students is very helpful. Handbooks and leaflets provide students with a detailed understanding of the demands and benefits of their courses. Students value the good individual support they receive in lessons. There are good opportunities for independent study in the learning resource centres. Specialist enrichment activities are provided to support students on EFL and interpreting courses. These include workshops, external visits, specialist lectures and an annual interpreting conference.

Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management across the provision are satisfactory. There is effective communication with regular, well-recorded meetings and follow-up action. Quality assurance is generally effective, although the action planning following reviews of GCSE English courses does not adequately cover the weaknesses in this area. There are opportunities for the sharing of good practice at meetings and during staff development activities. Staff feel well supported and make

good use of staff development opportunities. Equality of opportunity is promoted well through the wide range of courses, individual support for students in lessons and staff development opportunities.

English for speakers of other languages



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good progress in the use of everyday language
- effective use of students' own languages in teaching and learning
- good use of a variety of learning resources at all sites
- effective work with hard-to-reach groups
- good personal support.

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- inadequate individual target-setting and reviews of students' progress
- narrow range of programmes to support access to vocational courses
- insufficient individual guidance to support progression.

Scope of provision

116. The college offers 141 courses in ESOL at its 3 centres, in 5 community locations, with a franchise partner, and in the workplace. The provision includes discrete ESOL programmes, vocational courses, five programmes for students aged 16 to 18 and Jobcentre Plus programmes. There are 2,233 adults and 221 students aged 16 aged 18 at college centres, 84 Jobcentre Plus clients and 45 students aged 14 to 16. The full-time and part-time programmes for adults are offered on a two-term basis five days a week, from morning to evening. There are seven levels in the discrete ESOL provision from pre-entry to level 2, with an option to move quickly between levels at beginner and entry levels 1 and 2.

Achievement and standards

117. Pass and retention rates are mixed. The pass rates for the certificate in English language skills increased significantly between 2002 and 2003 to 21% above the national average. The pass rate for the Pitman ESOL basic short course in 2003 was 26% above the national average and has increased by 33% from 2002. The pass rates on the Pitman ESOL spoken intermediate short course and the Pitman ESOL intermediate long course are low. Retention rates for the Pitman ESOL short course were maintained at a high level between 2002 and 2003. The retention rate for the Pitman ESOL elementary long course has declined between 2002 and 2003 to 13% below the national average. Other retention rates are similar to the national average.

118. Students achieve a satisfactory standard in spoken English. They gain confidence and make good progress despite difficulties, in many cases, in their personal lives and circumstances. They are able to use English in personal and social contexts; their improved communication skills enable them to deal confidently with the demands of every day life. Many adult students come with good vocational and educational achievements from other countries. These prior achievements are not always taken into account when planning individual students' learning programmes. Some students do not make sufficient progress in their writing skills to achieve their long-term goals within a reasonable timescale. Many professionally qualified students do not learn language in vocationally relevant contexts.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English for speakers of other languages, 2001 to 2003

| Qualification | Level | Completion year: | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Pitman ESOL basic (short) | Entry | No. of starts | * | 518 | 494 |
| | | % retention | * | 97 | 95 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 28 | 61 |
| Pitman ESOL elementary (long) | Entry | No. of starts | * | 400 | 268 |
| | | % retention | * | 98 | 91 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 25 | 44 |
| Certificate in English language skills (long) | Entry | No. of starts | * | 273 | 230 |
| | | % retention | * | 73 | 68 |
| | | % pass rate | * | 56 | 71 |
| Pitman ESOL spoken intermediate (short) | 1 | No. of starts | * | * | 349 |
| | | % retention | * | * | 87 |
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 35 |
| Pitman ESOL intermediate (long) | 1 | No. of starts | * | * | 53 |
| | | % retention | * | * | 83 |
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 20 |
| Pitman ESOL intermediate (short) | 1 | No. of starts | * | * | 55 |
| | | % retention | * | * | 78 |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------|---|---|----|
| | | % pass rate | * | * | 63 |
|--|--|-------------|---|---|----|

Source: ISR (2001 and 2002), college (2003)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

119. Most teaching is satisfactory for all students. In the better lessons, students tackle relevant and challenging tasks. Teachers present new language using relevant contexts and provide students with effective opportunities to practice. There are extension activities for those students who complete tasks swiftly. Many teachers are bilingual and make effective use of the students' own languages in teaching and learning. Learning materials are translated into other languages. Teaching at community venues is good or better. Teachers make good use of learning materials and take account of students' different learning needs. For example, in one lesson, the teacher asked the students to respond in different ways to show their recognition of foods for a recipe. The teacher allowed a non-literate student to pick up the ingredients rather than writing the food's names on a worksheet. In a minority of less-than-satisfactory lessons, teachers do not recognise students' individual learning needs. There is weak checking of students' understanding, an over-emphasis on worksheet activities and the use of tasks unrelated to learning.

120. There is good use of a wide variety of teaching and learning resources at all college centres and community venues. Staff are encouraged to develop and share resources through placing materials on the college intranet. All staff have access to schemes of work, lesson plans and other essential documents through the intranet. Skills for life materials are available to all teachers, but they do not use always them effectively. All students have access to appropriate textbooks and readers, bilingual dictionaries and audio-visual resources. Students have good access to computer-aided language learning in the college and at community venues. Teachers use multilingual handouts effectively to help students understand technical ICT commands in their own language.

121. Most staff are experienced and qualified in ESOL teaching. The staff development programme offers a wide range of relevant training, although take-up of staff development is not monitored rigorously. A few staff have not had training in the effective use of individual learning plans. Some staff delivering vocational programmes for ESOL students have had no training in language teaching. Most teaching accommodation is satisfactory.

122. The targets set for students in their individual learning plans are not sufficiently specific. The assessment of students' progress against their planned learning goals is inadequate in lessons, and the plans do not encourage independent learning or identify students' further learning needs. The systems of assessments through examinations and internal tests are well organised.

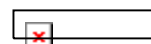
123. The college has effective ways of engaging with and supporting groups in the community who do not normally take part in FE. They have established partnership projects with schools and local community organisations and providers. These organisations target Asian women, Somali people, including the elderly, and Iraqi and Ethiopian refugees. The 14 to 16 project caters for young, unaccompanied asylum seekers. There is a narrow range of programmes to provide access to vocational and academic courses. The college provides vocational link courses in four areas, accessible when students have reached entry level 4. In some preparation for work courses and Jobcentre Plus programmes, there is insufficient focus on work-related language acquisition. There are also insufficient opportunities for students to gain additional skills and qualifications to increase their employability. Many students are highly qualified from their country of origin, and entry-level ESOL courses are unsuitable for this group, many of whom are aspiring to gain equivalent employment in this country.

124. Personal support for students is good. Staff are sensitive to the personal needs and circumstances of students. They provide individual attention both during and outside of lessons. However, there is insufficient careers guidance and no work experience opportunities, except for ESOL ICT students.

Leadership and management

125. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Regular staff meetings focus on teaching and learning and students' performance. There are established quality assurance arrangements. There are good links with the management of the franchised provision to support quality assurance and staff development. Managers have improved the monitoring of achievement and analysis of data in the franchise and outreach provision to provide partners with a greater understanding of this area. There is good promotion of inclusion and equal opportunities in the curriculum.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- good progress of many students during their courses
- good teaching and learning
- good support from learning assistants
- excellent links with the community
- effective quality assurance processes.

Weaknesses

- ineffective target setting and review of individual learning plans
- inadequate resources in outreach provision.

Scope of provision

126. The college provides a wide range of full-time and part-time courses. The bridge course, the new opportunities course and the foundation studies course offer good opportunities for

achievement of qualifications as well as a comprehensive work experience programme. The college provides a range of part-time courses for adults who wish to improve their basic and job seeking skills. There are currently 349 students on full-time and part-time courses, of which 83% are aged over 19.

Achievement and standards

127. There is good progression within courses and significant achievement of qualifications. Most students make good or better progress; although students aged 16 to 18 make better progress than adults. Approximately one-third of students go on to employment. The remainder move to other types of FE or training. The number of students who leave their course of study is low. Throughout the college, there are posters recognising and celebrating the achievements of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Work in students' portfolios is good. For example, after a bakery lesson, students were able to describe effectively the making of cakes. In another lesson, on applying for a job, students were able to write about their own experiences clearly and accurately. Students develop good life and vocational skills. Students' attendance in this curriculum area is the highest in the college.

Quality of education and training

128. Teaching and learning are good in most lessons, and none is unsatisfactory. The teaching and learning for students aged 16 to 18 are better than for adults. Good planning and support for teaching and learning enable students to develop new skills effectively. For example, students took part in a drama activity which involved taking turns, listening to others and following instructions. At the end of the lessons, the students' ability to think of others, listen and recall information had improved significantly. High-quality learning materials and activities engage the interest of students. Teachers conduct practical lessons at a lively pace and keep students interested and motivated. Literacy and numeracy support are an effective part of lessons. There is an extensive and effective work experience programme, which improves students' learning and results in a considerable number of paid work placements. Occasionally, there is an over-reliance on worksheets and inadequate checks on learning. There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning and skills development.

129. Staff qualifications and experience are appropriate and there are effective staff development opportunities. There are inadequate resources in the outreach provision, where there are out-of-date computers. Some lessons take place in an inappropriate location, where other activities nearby affect the quality of learning.

130. The college takes into account effectively the very wide range of needs and interests of students and the local community in the design and operation of courses. There is a wide range of social and vocational courses, including many in outreach centres. The college offers provision for those who are under-represented in colleges. For example, those with mental health difficulties from minority ethnic groups. The range of courses available to students on outreach programmes is not as wide as that offered to students aged 16 to 18 based at the college.

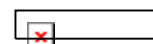
131. Guidance and support for students are good. There is comprehensive initial assessment of student's literacy and numeracy requirements, with good summaries of the key points available to staff. There are regular termly reviews of progress and, if appropriate, parents and/or carers are included in the feedback to students. Individual learning plans identify students' strengths and broad areas for development. The targets set in these plans with regard to literacy and numeracy are insufficiently precise, and there is limited acknowledgement of personal learning goals or experience and assessment of learning styles.

132. Support staff work well together. They provide high standards of personal care and academic support in lessons. There is careful guidance on health and safety.

Leadership and management

133. Leadership and management are good. Managers have developed excellent links with local community groups, which enable many of these groups to benefit from the work of the college. Communications and teamwork between staff are good, especially between teachers and learning support workers. The deployment of staff is effective. There are regular team meetings, which focus on the needs of students and take account of the results of student focus group meetings. Quality assurance arrangements are good. There are comprehensive and thorough arrangements for self-assessment. There are rigorous course review meetings. These meetings lead to effective action for improvement and the resolving of weaknesses.

Literacy and numeracy



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high level of individual learning support for students on discrete courses
- wide range of courses
- high retention rates on most courses.

Weaknesses

- inadequate target setting and progress reviews
- low pass rates on key skills courses
- insufficient good or better teaching.

Scope of provision

134. The college provides a wide range of literacy and numeracy courses effectively designed to meet the needs of a diverse range of students. There are 50 full-time and over 200 part-time students on the main discrete basic skills programmes. There are 50 students on a pre-GCSE English course and 58 on the 'rusty maths' course. There is also a range of full-time courses aimed at improving literacy, numeracy and study skills in 5 curriculum areas providing for 20 students in science and mathematics, 40 in ICT, 20 in health and social care, 8 in hospitality and 28 on foundation programmes. Three community classes for disengaged young black learners are

provided in Harlesden. Approximately 1,000 students are taking part in vocational and other courses across the college, studying towards the achievement of national tests in literacy and numeracy at levels 1 and 2. Language and numeracy support is integrated into lessons and, additionally, individual learning sessions are offered in timetabled workshops. Some 82% of students are adults.

Achievement and standards

135. Of the 545 students in 2003 who completed literacy and numeracy support in lessons or in individual learning sessions, 96% successfully achieved their learning objectives. The pass rate for the return to learn course has been maintained at a high level for the last three years. Pass rates for key skills application of number and communications at level 1 have been very low in the three years to 2003. For example, in 2003, for the 414 students on the application of number course at level 1, the pass rate was only 10%. Most retention rates are high, although for key skills courses, retention rates have declined to around the national average from 2001 to 2003. Retention rates are good for students receiving literacy and numeracy support in lessons and in individual learning sessions: only 13% failed to complete their learning programmes in 2003. On the return to learn programme in 2003, the retention rate increased by 11% from the previous year to 86%.

136. Most students work hard and make good progress towards achieving their main learning goals. Many have not taken part in education for some years. Students make accurate and comprehensive notes during lesson. Most produce good quality well-presented portfolios of evidence. Students take pride in the work that they produce. They develop good study and research skills. Tutors place much emphasis on attendance and timekeeping. However, attendance and timekeeping is unsatisfactory in some lessons. Attendance during the inspection was below average.

Quality of education and training

137. Teaching in most lessons is at least satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that students understand learning objectives. They provide a friendly and supportive atmosphere and students take a full part in learning activities. There is effective use of group and individual teaching. Many lessons are lively and fully engage students' interest. Teachers prepare high-quality, up-to-date learning materials and make good use of television, radio and ICT. Teachers ensure there is good use of dictionaries and other reference sources by students. There is insufficient teaching and learning which is good or better. Weaknesses in teaching include a lack of variety in teaching styles, insufficient learning activities that involve all students, and an over-use of worksheets, some of which are of poor quality. Teachers do not always cater adequately for the individual needs of students.

138. Teachers have relevant teaching qualifications and are experienced in working with students who need additional support. There are good opportunities for staff development and all literacy and numeracy teachers have taken part in training for the basic skills core curriculum and the diagnosis of students' individual learning needs. Several members of staff are currently attending level 4 basic skills training courses. Classrooms are mostly well decorated and adequately furnished. There are relevant learning materials and some examples of students' work displayed on classroom walls.

139. All students on full-time courses and substantial part-time courses undergo an initial assessment. This is followed by a further diagnostic assessment of learning needs for those who need further support. Almost all students identified as needing learning support receive help. The setting of learning targets for individual students and the review of progress are inadequate. The literacy and numeracy skills of students are assessed before entry to the course. The results of the initial assessment are used as the basis of short-term learning targets. Most of these targets are not sufficiently specific. Reviews of progress fail to identify students' attainment and progress effectively against their targets. In basic level 1 mathematics and some learning support lessons, detailed learning plans covering planning and recording progress are not used.

140. Students on literacy and numeracy discrete courses receive a high level of individual learning support during lessons. Teachers make a particularly effective effort to integrate new students into lessons. Good use is made of peer support within lessons. Teachers raise students' self-confidence and esteem through a supportive atmosphere at each centre and in lessons. Tutors provide

appropriate educational and personal guidance and support and are experienced in working with students from a variety of backgrounds and under-represented groups. Students receive regular individual and group tutorials.

Leadership and management

141. Leadership and management for literacy and numeracy across the college are satisfactory. A new structure for the management of literacy and numeracy support has recently been introduced. There is a new comprehensive cross-college action plan to improve the provision, and a strategy to improve key skills pass rates through greater use of literacy and numeracy tests is in place. There is insufficient sharing of good practice by staff across the provision. The process of diagnosing students' learning needs and the completion of learning plans vary greatly between programmes. There is little co-ordination between literacy, numeracy and ICT learning sessions, even where these skills form the basis of a programme of study.

Part D: College data

Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2001/02

| Level | 16-18 % | 19+ % |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | 43 | 48 |
| 2 | 29 | 19 |
| 3 | 14 | 8 |
| 4/5 | 0 | 2 |
| Other | 14 | 23 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2001/02

| Curriculum area | 16-18 No. | 19+ No. | Total Enrolments (%) |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|
| Science and mathematics | 781 | 1,397 | 5 |
| Land-based provision | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Construction | 562 | 2,200 | 7 |
| Engineering, technology and manufacture | 409 | 2,170 | 6 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Business administration, management and professional | 193 | 3,598 | 9 |
| Information and communications technology | 891 | 8,428 | 22 |
| Retailing, customer service and transportation | 0 | 24 | 0 |
| Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel | 126 | 337 | 1 |
| Hairdressing and beauty therapy | 73 | 348 | 1 |
| Health, social care and public services | 245 | 984 | 4 |
| Visual and performing arts and media | 171 | 538 | 2 |
| Humanities | 123 | 337 | 1 |
| English, languages and communication | 645 | 2,104 | 7 |
| Foundation programmes | 2,592 | 11,844 | 35 |
| Total | 6,811 | 34,309 | 100 |

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

| Level (Long Courses) | Retention and pass rate | Completion year | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | 16-18 | | | 19+ | | |
| | | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
| | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Starters excluding transfers | 704 | 709 | 641 | 4,392 | 3,804 | 3,063 |
| | Retention rate (%) | 68 | 76 | 68 | 73 | 78 | 75 |
| | National average (%) | 74 | 75 | 75 | 70 | 73 | 74 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 54 | 48 | 70 | 57 | 52 | 65 |
| | National average (%) | 64 | 64 | 66 | 65 | 68 | 69 |
| 2 | Starters excluding transfers | 822 | 849 | 702 | 2,466 | 2,636 | 1,979 |
| | Retention rate (%) | 59 | 60 | 64 | 68 | 66 | 70 |
| | National average (%) | 69 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 69 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 57 | 53 | 61 | 63 | 61 | 65 |
| | National average (%) | 66 | 67 | 68 | 65 | 65 | 69 |
| 3 | Starters excluding transfers | 539 | 934 | 823 | 1,566 | 1,697 | 1,477 |
| | Retention rate (%) | 54 | 76 | 78 | 72 | 71 | 78 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| | National average (%) | 62 | 67 | 75 | 67 | 67 | 70 |
| | Pass rate (%) | 64 | 56 | 67 | 59 | 60 | 67 |
| | National average (%) | 69 | 70 | 73 | 63 | 65 | 69 |
| 4/5 | Starters excluding transfers | * | * | * | 67 | 79 | 84 |
| | Retention rate | * | * | * | 615 | 321 | 319 |
| | National average | * | * | * | 66 | 65 | 70 |
| | Pass rate | * | * | * | 62 | 61 | 46 |
| | National average | * | * | * | 50 | 49 | 49 |

Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary colleges or sixth form colleges).

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 1999 to 2001: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2002.

2. College rates for 1999 to 2002: College ISR.

** fewer than 15 starters enrolled*

Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level

| Courses | Teaching judged to be: | | | No of sessions observed |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Good or better % | Satisfactory % | Less than satisfactory % | |
| Level 3 (advanced) | 61 | 37 | 2 | 67 |
| Level 2 (intermediate) | 60 | 34 | 6 | 73 |
| Level 1 (foundation) | 50 | 42 | 8 | 50 |
| Other sessions | 51 | 43 | 6 | 75 |
| Totals | 56 | 39 | 5 | 265 |