College of North West London

Better education and care

Re-inspection report

Audience	Published	Provider reference
Post-sixteen	TBC	130429

Introduction

The College of North West London was inspected in January 2004. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in science and mathematics which was found to be less than satisfactory. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is less than satisfactory within two years of the original inspection. If inadequate areas of learning or aspects of provision remain inadequate following re-inspection, inspectors will continue to monitor progress at annual assessment visits, but the areas will not be re-graded. They will be re-inspected during the full college inspection.

The less than satisfactory curriculum area was re-inspected on 28 February and 1 March 2006. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

Curriculum area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Science and mathematics	4	3

Context

The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in science and mathematics. These include evening GCSE courses, full-time vocational science programmes at the main college site and AS and A levels in partnership with the Islamic Centre for Advanced Studies (ICAS). Approximately 180 full-time and 150 part-time students are enrolled on this provision and around 40% of them are aged 19 or older.

Strengths

- Significantly improved pass rates on most courses
- High pass rates on mathematics courses
- Wide range of provision that meets local needs
- Good curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Too little good or better teaching
- Under-developed use of targets to help students make progress
- Inconsistent marking of homework and assignments

Achievement and standards

Pass rates on AS and A2 courses have improved significantly since the inspection and most are now good. Pass rates in all mathematics courses are good. The percentage of students gaining a grade of C or better for GCSE mathematics is above the national average. Pass rates for vocational science courses were poor in 2004 but improved in 2005. Retention rates on most courses remain high and are particularly good on the level 1 'rusty maths' course. The quality of students' written work is generally satisfactory. However, on vocational science programmes much work contains poorly drawn and labelled diagrams and does not include the correct use of units on tables and graphs.

Quality of provision

As recognised by the college's own internal lesson observation system, teaching and learning in this area are broadly satisfactory. Too little teaching is good or better. During the re-inspection inspectors observed a good range of teaching and learning methods, including quick starter activities, matching tasks and the use by students of small hand held whiteboards. However, too often teachers lack the necessary classroom management skills to ensure that these activities are always effective. Teaching at ICAS now takes place in properly furnished and equipped classrooms although students have to travel to the main college site for practical science lessons. Tutors track students' academic progress but often the action plans are too general to be helpful to students. The setting, marking and recording of homework in mathematics is good but this is not the case for AS and A2 sciences.

Leadership and management

Curriculum leadership and management are good. Actions taken following the inspection have led to improvements in success rates. Staff development has been successful in encouraging teachers to use a wider range of teaching methods and materials. There has been less success, though, in developing teachers' classroom management skills. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate but contains insufficient analysis of the strengths and weaknesses that characterise the teaching.