



Barnet College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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Basic information about the college

Name of college: Barnet College

Type of college: General Further Education

Principal: Marilyn Hawkins

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Chair of governors: Tony Alderman

Unique reference number: 130425

Name of lead inspector: Neil Edwards, ALI

Dates of inspection: 8-12 May 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Barnet College is a general further education (FE) college. It is located at three main and three subsidiary centres in the London Borough of Barnet. Its mission is 'to work with its partners and promote innovative, high quality learning which will enable its diverse communities to access education and training'. The college is the main contract holder for the delivery of adult and community learning (ACL) in the borough on behalf of the Learning in Barnet Partnership. Adult learners accounted for 82% of the college's enrolments in 2004/05.
2. The college's catchment area is predominantly the north London boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Brent. It is estimated that a quarter of the people in this area have no, or very low, levels of qualifications. The college draws significantly from this group. In addition, the college also attracts new settlers in the area such as refugees and asylum seekers. Barnet (population 314,500) is the second largest borough in London and has some significant areas of deprivation. The college operates a dedicated employer training department and has developed numerous and diverse links with community organisations and employers, including the London Underground. It also manages a small franchise provision and offers a range of courses at weekends. The college contracts its LearnDirect provision from Action for Employment (A4E).
3. In 2004/05, the college enrolled a total of 22,081 learners of whom 18,133 (82%) were aged 19 and over. Of the 5,279 full-time learners, 2,818 (53%) were aged 16-18. Sixty two per cent of learners are female. Approximately half were from minority ethnic groups. The college offers academic and vocational provision in 14 of the QCA sector/subject areas.

Scope of the inspection

4. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:
 - overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
 - achievements and standards
 - quality of provision
 - leadership and management
 - specialist provision in: health, public services and care; engineering and manufacturing technologies; retail and commercial enterprise; leisure, travel and tourism; arts, media and publishing; preparation for life and work programmes.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievements and standards	Good: grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: grade 2

Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.

Curriculum areas

Health, public services and care	Outstanding: grade 1
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Good: grade 2
Retail and commercial enterprise	Good: grade 2
Leisure, travel and tourism	Good: grade 2
Arts, media and publishing	Outstanding: grade 1
Preparation for life and work	Good: grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

5. This is a good college. Success rates have improved at all levels and are now good. Pass rates have risen and are now above national averages. Learners' success on ACL courses is very good, although for the very small number of work-based learners, timely achievements remain unsatisfactory. However, the college has a well considered and planned strategy to re-align its work-based learning provision to meet local priorities and no more learners are currently being enrolled onto apprenticeships. Attendance is good and continues to improve. Most learners enjoy their lessons and behaviour is particularly good. The college continues to work on improving learners' punctuality to lessons.
6. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good and in some areas outstanding. The comprehensive scheme for observing lessons has enabled the college to accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement. A significant investment in resources and training for information and learning technology (ILT) has increased the use and effectiveness of ILT in lessons.
7. There is a good range of programmes available throughout the college. There is extensive and varied provision for learners aged 14-16 ranging from entry level to level 1. There is a limited range of enrichment activities in some curriculum areas.
8. There is good guidance and support for learners. Access to English language support is particularly well used. A comprehensive tutorial system operates across the college. Learners who receive additional learning support make good progress and are successful on their courses.
9. The introduction of new management information systems has greatly improved the accuracy and dissemination of management information, and this is now being used well to monitor performance. The college has made improvements to accommodation, in line with its ambitious accommodation strategy. Substantial re-development is planned, approved in principle by the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC).
10. Leadership, management and governance are good. The principal and governors set a clear direction for the college. Aspects have improved, particularly in the performance of some curriculum areas since the last inspection. There has been good progress in areas such as the quality of teaching and learning and the rigour of course reviews. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and essentially accurate. The college provides good value for money. The college's response to social and educational inclusion is good.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

11. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve. The principal, governors and senior managers have developed a strong strategic direction which is clearly understood and shared by staff throughout the college. The college recovery plan has been well implemented and monitored thoroughly by senior managers and governors. The college's financial position has improved significantly since 2003 and is now in financial health category B.
12. Quality improvement processes are comprehensive and effective in monitoring performance and raising standards. Self-assessment is thorough and applied to all aspects of college provision. Data is used effectively to monitor performance and managers have accurately identified the main strengths of the college and areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

13. Good progress has been made in securing improvements since the last inspection. All the key weaknesses identified at the last inspection in 2002 have been addressed and most have improved significantly. Of the six curriculum areas inspected, five have improved their grades since the last inspection. Overall success rates have steadily increased at most levels with the exception of level 4 provision for adults. Good use has been made of value added data. Management information is now more robust and quality assurance activities are well developed and effective.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- clear strategic direction
- good and improving success rates across most provision
- good teaching and learning
- good support for learners
- outstanding partnership working
- outstanding provision in health, public services and care and arts, media and publishing
- effective promotion of equality and diversity.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- ineffective target setting for learners in some areas
- limited range of enrichment activities in some curriculum areas
- insufficient integration of key skills in teaching programmes.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

14. Standards and achievement are good. In 2005, success rates have increased year on year for all levels and ages with the exception of level 4 provision for adults. Success rates were above the national averages for level 1 provision for adults and levels 1 and 2 provision for 16-18 year olds. The college is in the top 10% of colleges for level 2 courses. The college has been particularly successful in improving success rates on level 3 vocational courses and level 3 success rates for 16-18 year olds are around the national average. Success rates for levels 1 and 3 courses for adults are above national averages and success rates on courses for adults are high across all provision.
15. Retention rates are good in most areas, although they are low in hospitality and catering and on some construction courses. Retention is particularly high on adult and community learning courses. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is currently 82%. Many school pupils aged 14-16 who study for vocational qualifications at the college are successful. Progression rates from this programme to full-time courses at the college are good. Generally, progression to higher level courses is good. Timely framework achievements on work-based learning apprenticeships are poor although the number of learners is very low. The college is currently running down this provision before re-establishing it in more clearly targeted curriculum areas. Level 1 NVQ pass rates are poor including those for NVQ hairdressing and NVQ hospitality and catering. The college has recognised this and has put measures in place to improve provision. The standard of learners' work is generally good across all areas, with particularly good standards of practical skills demonstrated in care and performing arts and media. Key skills achievements have doubled in the last three years to 36% overall, although results are particularly low in some areas.
16. Pass rates on GCE A/AS level courses have risen, although they remain below national averages. Some of these courses have excellent A-C passes which are well above national averages. These include AS-level film studies and A-level psychology. However, the level of A-C passes in English language A-level and AS-level physics is low. There was a rising trend in success rates on key skills qualifications over three years to 2005. Value added systems are used throughout the college and high scores in many areas indicate that learners make good progress and often achieve well above expectations.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

17. Teaching and learning are good. In health and care and arts and media, some teaching is outstanding. The college's self-assessment of the overall quality of teaching and learning is accurate. The revised system for observing teaching

and learning has improved the accuracy of judgements considerably. There are now few unsatisfactory lessons. Support to improve the quality of teaching is carefully targeted in areas of most need. Teachers who receive unsatisfactory grades for lesson observations are supported particularly well. Additional learning support is well integrated into lessons.

18. The college intranet has a good range of useful teaching and learning materials. The intranet is particularly well used by learners on sports courses and includes a virtual tour of the sports department. There is good use of ICT to enhance learning in most areas.
19. Assessment is satisfactory. It is particularly thorough in health and care and arts and media. Feedback to learners is prompt with clear guidance on how to improve their work and many teachers demonstrate good moderation skills. Some teachers act as verifiers and moderators for external awarding bodies. Staff have yet to share best practice on key skills development. Comprehensive diagnostic procedures exist for all three key skills and there is a clear Skills for Life strategy to improve results.
20. There is an extensive range of programmes available throughout the college. The college prospectus is informative and easy to follow. There is extensive and varied provision for learners aged 14-16 ranging from entry level to level 2. There is a limited range of enrichment activities in some areas. Access to sport facilities for learners who are not at the Grahame Park site is difficult. There are some particularly good and creative curriculum enrichment activities for learners in art, media, and sports studies. Work experience is undeveloped in some curriculum areas.
21. Employers' training needs are clearly identified and effectively addressed. The college responds well to employers. Its employer training department has established an outstanding reputation with many employers. The college works well with a wide range of community groups and has developed an excellent relationship with the voluntary sector. Programmes have been effectively tailored to accommodate employer and learner needs. There are particularly strong links with employers and other organisations in many of the curriculum areas.
22. The college's response to social and educational inclusion is good. The range of provision meets local needs. Many learners come from socially disadvantaged areas. The college effectively delivers European Social Fund (ESF) projects in health and social care and retail. The adult and community learning provision is well managed by the college.
23. The college provides good support for learners with learning difficulties. The college has clear and effective procedures for child protection. The college has provided effective training in child protection for senior and middle managers and governors. All staff are made aware of their child protection responsibilities.

24. Learners receive good advice and guidance. Support needs of learners are well met through a variety of specialist services. Access to English language support is particularly well used. A comprehensive tutorial system operates across the college. Learners at risk of failure are carefully monitored and there is good joint working with external agencies to provide them with effective support. There is clear evidence to show that learners who receive additional learning support make good progress and are successful on their courses.
25. Individual learning plans do not always have sufficiently clear targets. A new well structured system of learning plans has been introduced with monitoring and moderation by programme and area managers. The college has worked hard to improve the quality of learning plans but this has yet to be achieved consistently across curriculum areas.

Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

26. Leadership and management are good. The principal, governors and senior managers set a clear strategic direction with a strong focus on improving the learners' experience. Curriculum management is generally good or better. Effective communications across the college ensure staff are kept well informed. There is a clear focus on quality improvement and the self-assessment report is largely accurate. Targets for improvement in course reviews were not always sufficiently specific or measurable. Recently revised course review documentation provides a better mechanism for monitoring and tracking progress towards targets. The introduction of new management information systems has improved the accuracy of data. Staff are well qualified and most have teaching qualifications or are undertaking training. There is a clearly planned programme of staff development and its impact is carefully monitored.
27. The college contributes well to the improvement of educational opportunities in the area through outstanding local partnership working and plays a key role in local 14-19 strategies. The college effectively manages the contract for the provision of adult and community learning in the borough and sub-contractors speak highly of the support they receive from the college.
28. The college meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 and the Children Act 2004. Child protection procedures are comprehensive and staff and governors have received appropriate training. Appropriate health and safety checks are in place. The college has received international awards for its health and safety policies and procedures. Some college accommodation is no longer fit for purpose and the college has a well considered accommodation strategy, approved in principle by the local LSC. Learners with restricted mobility can access most of the college and appropriate arrangements are made in the few areas which are not fully accessible. The college thoroughly analyses equality and diversity data on staff and learners. Any areas of

concern are addressed and actions are clearly monitored. The college is aware that more needs to be done to develop and monitor actions in a few departments.

29. The recovery plan has been well implemented and monitored, with the support of the local LSC, and financial management is good. The college has improved its financial position and achieved financial targets ahead of time, while maintaining a strong focus on the quality of learners' experience. Resources are utilised effectively and value for money is good.
30. Governance is particularly effective in monitoring college performance and governors have been active in redefining the college mission to meet local and national priorities and needs. Governors have a wide range of relevant skills and support the college well. They are well informed about the key issues and challenges ahead.

Curriculum area inspections

Health, public services and care

Outstanding: grade 1

Context

31. There is a good range of provision for students. Full- and part-time courses are offered in care and early years at levels 1 to 4 and in public services at level 2. There is a wide range of short courses and access to higher education courses. At the time of inspection, level 1 courses had 277 learners, 742 at level 2 and 1,297 at level 3. There are 215 learners on national vocational qualifications levels 2 to 4, including registered manager awards. Eighty nine per cent of learners are adults. Sixty six per cent of learners are female and 53% of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Local school pupils aged 14-16 follow modules within health and childcare. A centre of vocational excellence in health and social care was established in 2003.

Strengths

- high success rates
- good progression to further study
- highly effective use of work experience to enhance learning
- good teaching and learning
- highly effective monitoring of progress
- very effective partnership with employers
- very well managed provision.

Areas for improvement

- no significant areas for improvement.

Achievements and standards

32. Success rates are well above the national average on all programmes. On GNVQ foundation health and social care, the certificate in pre-school practice and AVCE health and social care success rates are especially high. There have been considerable improvements in pass rates on NVQ programmes, identified as a weakness in the last inspection. Work experience is used very effectively to develop a wide range of vocational skills. Learners on public services demonstrate good practical skills and safe practices. Learners at all levels develop their self-confidence, working effectively and industriously on their own or in small groups. There is good progression to further study or relevant employment. Attendance and punctuality are good on most programmes although poorer on a few part-time evening courses.

Quality of provision

33. Teaching and learning are good and in some cases outstanding. Lessons are carefully planned and well managed. Learning activities are chosen well to interest and motivate learners. Learners' prior attainment is used well to plan lessons and effective use is made of vocational experiences within lessons.
34. Enrichment activities such as visits and outside speakers are incorporated effectively to support learning. Learners enjoy lessons and participate with confidence. They have very good access to information learning technology (ILT), many using these skills effectively in lessons and assignment work. This was identified as a weakness in the last inspection which has been addressed effectively.
35. There is highly effective monitoring of learners' progress and accurate and timely assessment of their work. Clear written feedback is given to learners on how to improve. There is particularly good tutorial and individual support. Challenging targets for completion of work are set. Good advice and guidance are given to all learners.

Leadership and management

36. There is good leadership and management of the curriculum and CoVE. There are outstanding partnership links with a wide range of employers. The self-assessment report is highly evaluative and accurate. There are comprehensive procedures for course review that are supported by accurate management data. Action plans for improvement have clear targets and areas of improvement are successfully addressed. Communication between staff is highly effective. The observation of teaching and learning is effective in identifying good practice and areas for staff development. Staff regularly update their vocational practice. Continuous attention is given to safe working practice and parents of younger learners are kept well informed of progress.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Good: grade 2

Context

37. The college offers a narrow range of full-time engineering courses which includes the GNVQ in foundation engineering at level 1, and BTEC first diploma at level 2. In addition, the college runs a joint CoVE with Four Counties Training Ltd to deliver NVQ level 2 rail operations to employees of the London Underground. At the time of inspection there were 39 full-time learners aged between 16-18 at the college provision and 1,641 part-time learners enrolled on the rail transport operations programme. Three full-time members of staff and two part-time staff deliver the courses at the college. Four Counties Training Ltd are responsible for assessments in the workplace on the CoVE provision.

Strengths

- good success rates
- very high attendance rates
- highly effective staff development to improve teaching and learning in the college
- good support for learners on college-based provision
- strong partnerships with employers and training provider
- good management of the provision.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient progression opportunities for college-based learners
- insufficient work experience for learners on college-based provision
- uninspiring classrooms and IT workshops at the college.

Achievement and standards

38. Learners' success rates are high. Over the past two years, success rates have been above the national averages on GNVQ foundation and intermediate courses. Success rates on the part-time CAD course have been above the national average for the past three years. Since 2002/03, over 7,000 London Underground staff have successfully passed the NVQ level 2 in rail operations. The success rates on this programme are particularly high. Retention on most courses is good. Good improvements in learners' attendance and punctuality have been achieved and there is now high attendance on all courses.

Quality of provision

39. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lesson planning is effective with a variety of methods employed to promote learning. Tutors make good use of ILT. However, not all lessons are taught as planned and in a small number of classes, learners were not sufficiently motivated.

40. Learners are well supported by their teachers and trainers. Learners speak highly of the staff and support they provide. Many college learners benefit from taking additional qualifications including GCSE's in maths and English language. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Initial assessments clearly inform support needs. Individual learning plans (ILP's) are regularly reviewed and there is good action planning with learners.
41. There are insufficient progression opportunities for learners at the college. There is no level 3 engineering provision and the AVCE course was finished two years ago. Few learners progress to higher education.
42. Classrooms and IT workshops at the college provision are poorly decorated. Rooms are frequently hot and stuffy. Learners on college courses have insufficient work experience to improve their learning experience.

Leadership and management

43. Leadership and management are good. Management of the CoVE is particularly good and there are regular meetings held with Four Counties Ltd to ensure the quality of this provision. There are clear targets set to improve attendance and punctuality. Staff development is good. Most staff have had recent secondments into local industry to improve their industrial updating. Monitoring of teaching and learning is effective at raising standards. The self-assessment process accurately assessed its college-based provision but failed to include the sub-contracted provision as part of its remit. The college has developed a successful partnership with London Underground and with Four Counties Training Ltd.

Retail and commercial enterprise

Good: grade 2

Context

44. At the time of inspection there were 705 learners on full- and part-time courses at NVQ levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing, media make-up and beauty therapy. Most learners are female, part-time and over 19 years of age. Hairdressing and beauty therapy are taught in purpose built accommodation at the college's Grahame Park site. There are 21 full-time and part-time teaching staff. Thirty learners are on work-based learning apprenticeships. There are 73 school students on entry and NVQ level 1 courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy. They attend college one day each week. Forty eight percent of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Strengths

- high retention rates on most courses
- good success rates on beauty therapy courses
- good acquisition of practical skills by learners
- good teaching and learning
- effective support for students
- strong leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- poor success rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing
- poor achievement of work-based learning frameworks
- inadequate co-ordination of on and off the job training for work-based learners.

Achievement and standards

45. There are very high retention rates on most courses. Retention rates are consistently above national averages and on many courses are up to 20% above. Success rates on beauty therapy courses are particularly good. However, success rates on NVQ level 2 hairdressing are poor and have been declining over the last two years. Staff have put measures in place to improve this.
46. Learners acquire and demonstrate good practical skills. Attendance and punctuality are good in most classes and this is monitored closely. Lateness is challenged appropriately. Achievement of work-based learning frameworks is poor and most learners who achieve do so after the planned completion date. The college have not recruited any more learners onto apprenticeships and there are a small number of learners in this area.

Quality of provision

47. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers effectively use a wide range of teaching techniques to promote learning. Learners develop good confidence and customer service skills. Good emphasis is placed on health and safety. Teachers use clear examples from their own commercial experiences to illustrate key points. Learners respond well in class and show good levels of understanding. Key skills are not yet fully integrated into the curriculum. Appropriate use is made of ILT and learners have good access to computers.
48. Assessment procedures are thorough. There is particularly good support for students. Group tutorials are successfully used to develop skills and individual tutorials effectively monitor progress. Learners are set demanding targets. Less able learners receive particularly good individual support. Additional study workshops are available at lunchtimes for learners with additional learning needs.
49. Learners speak positively about enrichment opportunities and many use the sports facilities on site. The selection and induction procedures are thorough. Co-ordination between college and workplace training is inadequate. Theory lessons for apprentices do not synchronise with practical work being developed in the workplace.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are good. Staff effectively share good practice. Procedures for quality monitoring are understood and clearly followed by all staff. Resources are effectively used. Lesson observations are detailed and lead to improvements. All staff are involved in the development of the self-assessment report, target setting and action planning. Self-assessment is clear and largely accurate. Effective meetings are held to review curriculum development and monitor learner progress.

Leisure, travel and tourism

Good: grade 2

Context

51. The college offers a good range of courses in sport and travel from levels 1 to 3 at two sites and in sport from levels 1 to 4 at one site. At the time of inspection, 118 learners aged mainly 16-18 were on full-time sports courses. Thirty-four learners study part-time on sports courses. Four learners aged 14-16 and 193 aged mainly 16-18 study full-time courses in travel. Seventy learners study air fares and ticketing on weekend courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on most travel and some sports courses
- particularly effective acquisition of practical and work-related skills
- good teaching and learning
- outstanding use of the college intranet by learners within sport
- highly effective partnerships to develop the curriculum in sports
- good vocationally relevant enrichment
- strong and effective curriculum leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- low pass rates on CSLA, BTEC First diploma in Sport and NVQ Sport and Leisure
- insufficiently developed arrangements for key skills
- insufficient use of demanding targets to raise learners' performance.

Achievement and standards

52. Success rates on most travel and some sports courses are high and well above national averages. Pass rates on the community sports leaders award (CSLA), first diploma and NVQ level 2 in sport are low. The acquisition of practical and work related skills is particularly effective. Level 3 learners deliver very effective personal training programmes to staff and students whilst level 2 learners provide well planned gym inductions. Learners participate well in outside events, for example, acting as marshals at the London marathon. Many learners benefit by gaining additional qualifications such as pool lifeguard and air fares and ticketing certificates as well as their main qualification. Progression on to higher levels of study is good. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

53. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well structured and provide good individual coaching. Good use is made of ILT to enhance learning. Assessment is satisfactory and feedback is constructive. Some sports lessons make

effective use of peer teaching although in a small number of lessons planning for individualised learning is weak.

54. Outstanding use is made of the college intranet within sport. There is a comprehensive range of interactive learning materials and complete lesson notes and tasks for every class. Useful videos have been produced by staff and learners on a wide range of sporting issues.
55. Highly effective partnerships have been developed to meet local community needs in sports. Strong links are established with universities and the private and voluntary sector to develop the provision further. Vocationally relevant enrichment is good. Learners benefit from a comprehensive range of work placements, industry visits and guest speakers. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory.
56. The use of demanding targets to raise learners' performance is insufficient. Individual learning plans and reviews are not always clear. Targets are often too general and are not adequately followed up. Arrangements for key skills are insufficiently developed. In sport, key skills are not integrated into main programmes. Key skills have recently been integrated into travel programmes. Attendance here has improved but it is too early to see any significant improvements in achievement.

Leadership and management

57. Curriculum leadership and management are good. Strategic plans are well developed, providing clear vision and direction. The self-assessment report is largely accurate. Effective strategies have been implemented to improve under performing courses. Good use is made of data and performance indicators to monitor provision and learners' progress. Lesson observations effectively link to appraisals and staff development. Staff training and support are good. There are good internal communications and opportunities to share good practice. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

Arts, media and publishing

Outstanding: grade 1

Context

58. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time art, design, media and performing arts courses ranging from level 1 to level 3. Short courses are also offered. At the time of inspection, there were 39 learners aged 14-16. Twenty eight of these learners are enrolled on the young apprenticeship in performing arts and there is also a course for excluded young people. There are 11 full-time and 80 part-time learners on level 1 programmes. There are 109 full-time learners on level 2 programmes and at level 3 there are 451 full-time and 105 part-time learners.

Strengths

- outstanding success rates on almost all courses
- high standards of practical work
- particularly effective teaching and assessment to support independent learning
- outstanding links with the community and industry
- excellent range of progression routes
- highly effective tutorials and monitoring of learners' progress
- outstanding leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on the diploma in foundation studies in art and design.

Achievement and standards

59. Success rates are exceptionally high on most courses. Many courses have success rates that are significantly above national averages. Success rates on media related courses are outstanding. There are particularly high standards of practical work in performing arts, media and general art and design. Art and design learners manipulate materials creatively and there is confident drawing of three-dimensional form. Success rates are low on the foundation diploma in art and design, although numbers are small on this course. The college recognises this and has measures in place to address this issue.

Quality of provision

60. Teaching is good and in some cases outstanding. Technical support for learners is outstanding. Learners receive constructive and supportive feedback. Peer assessment is effectively used in media classes. Learners enjoy their work and are encouraged to work independently and be self-critical. Learners value each other's contributions. Additional learning support in classes is good and is well managed by teachers. Many teachers are practising artists and designers and use their experience well to enhance their teaching. Learners are highly motivated and enjoy their studies.

61. Performing arts courses are taught in an outstanding community arts centre which houses two public theatre and rehearsal spaces. This provides learners with excellent learning opportunities. Technical workshops are used effectively and there is good access to specialist workshops for learners. General and specialised studios and classrooms are bright and stimulating.
62. There is a full range of creative arts subjects available providing excellent progression opportunities. Courses are available at all levels and a new level 1 programme provides a good foundation for all of the subject pathways. Provision for 14-16 year olds is good with a young apprenticeship programme in performing arts and a particularly good course for young people who have been excluded from school. Links with the community and industry are outstanding. There are particularly strong links with local secondary and primary schools.
63. Tutorials are highly effective and provide particularly good personal support and guidance for learners. There are well considered individual and group tutorial programmes that are supplemented by studio tutorials and progress reviews that can be requested by learners at any time.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are outstanding. There is a consistent focus on raising standards and making improvements. Internal and external communications are highly effective and there is particularly good sharing of best practices. Professional development for staff is excellent. Management information data are used well to highlight issues and continuously improve. Self-assessment is accurate, concise and leads to clear action plans.

Preparation for life and work

Good: grade 2

Contributory grades:

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

65. The college offers English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses from pre-entry level to level 2. ESOL is taught across five sites as well as in 30 community venues. Of the 2,483 ESOL learners at the time of inspection, 542 are on full-time courses. Most learners are female and aged 19 or over. Most ESOL courses lead to new national qualifications and are taught by 131 part-time and full-time staff. Programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with mental health issues are mainly part-time over one year. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught on two of the main college sites and offsite in secure venues. Most of the 477 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and mental health learners are adults.

Strengths

- good achievements and progress on ESOL courses
- good development of practical skills for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners on mental health programmes
- good teaching and learning on ESOL programmes
- good range of ESOL programmes
- highly effective support for learners
- particularly effective links with community organisations to benefit learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good leadership and management of ESOL provision.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient use of ILT on ESOL programmes
- insufficient target setting and review of individual learners' progress
- underdeveloped assessment practices on programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Achievement and standards

66. Standards and achievement are good on ESOL courses. ESOL learners improve in confidence and motivation and become better communicators. A high number of learners progress to higher ESOL levels and others progress to vocational programmes or obtain jobs. Most learners completed their college certification in 2004/05 and most of the ESOL learners who were entered gained ESOL skills for life certificates. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners on mental health programmes develop good practical

skills in realistic working environments such as the college café. Most learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities work with confidence and demonstrate good skills.

Quality of provision

67. Teaching and learning are good for ESOL learners. Learners develop good communication skills. Learners are encouraged to try demanding tasks. Teaching and learning on programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are satisfactory.
68. There is a good and comprehensive range of ESOL programmes to meet local needs. Courses are carefully planned with clear progression routes from pre-entry to level 2. Learners can access courses in well over 30 venues across the borough. ESOL learners have good opportunities to gain additional expertise and further develop their skills on courses such as English for medical professionals and school teachers.
69. Particularly effective links have been established with a wide range of organisations to benefit learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include links with a local hospital and mental health services where learners are able to gain good life and employment skills and work through realistic activities.
70. There is highly effective support for ESOL learners, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners on mental health programmes. All learners have clearly planned tutorials with a personal tutor. Learners with personal problems are referred to appropriate college or external support services where they gain good additional support. Learners speak highly of the support they receive.
71. Learners undertake thorough initial assessments. The learning needs identified are not always used to develop clear targets for learners. Progress reviews do not always identify clear specific goals. Teachers on programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not always accurately record learners' progress. Assessment practices are underdeveloped on these programmes.
72. There is insufficient use of ILT on ESOL courses. Most teachers rely on conversation and discussion and little use is made of computer technology to help improve individual learning.

Leadership and management

73. ESOL leadership and management are good. Self-assessment is critical and actions to improve are implemented effectively. Management have been effective in merging former departments and introducing new national standards across the range of programmes. Communications are clear and

staff and learners' views are well considered in the self-assessment process. Observations of teaching and learning are effective and clearly linked to performance reviews, developmental activities and peer support.

74. Leadership and management of programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners on mental health programmes are satisfactory. Staff are well supported by a good range of professional development activities. Self-assessment is accurate.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts-Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts-Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	02/03	786	61	56	5	5797	68	55	13
	03/04	966	65	60	5	5764	63	59	4
	04/05	1403	74			8424	78		
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	194	56	60	-4	98	37	47	-10
	03/04	158	66	65	1	32	56	52	4
	04/05	165	74			16	50		
NVQs	02/03	25	60	56	4	26	88	57	31
	03/04	40	48	61	-13	78	41	62	-21
	04/05	78	50			92	45		
Other	02/03	567	62	56	6	5673	68	55	13
	03/04	768	66	60	6	5654	63	59	4
	04/05	1160	76			8316	78		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream Level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				Diff	19+			
		Starts-Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff		Starts-Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	02/03	1747	57	52	5	1423	40	49	-9	
	03/04	1648	66	56	10	1417	52	53	-1	
	04/05	1703	66			2068	55			
GCSEs	02/03	1166	63	57	6	586	44	55	-11	
	03/04	952	71	61	10	368	64	59	5	
	04/05	830	70			321	61			
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	334	56	59	-2	50	64	53	11	
	03/04	343	69	63	6	54	54	57	-3	
	04/05	113	73			10	60			
NVQs	02/03	116	31	42	-11	215	47	49	-2	
	03/04	160	49	52	-3	273	55	53	1	
	04/05	174	49			644	50			
Other	02/03	131	31	50	-19	572	31	48	-17	
	03/04	193	46	54	-8	722	45	52	-8	
	04/05	586	64			1093	56			

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				Diff	19+			
		Starts-Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff		Starts-Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	02/03	3067	57	62	-3	3389	31	51	-20	
	03/04	2959	63	64	-1	2184	57	53	4	
	04/05	2528	70			2072	61			
AVA2 levels	02/03	743	71	82	-11	354	52	63	-11	
	03/04	743	80	84	-4	327	61	66	-4	
	04/05	638	83			289	67			
AS Levels	02/03	1579	57	61	-4	518	37	48	-11	
	03/04	1292	57	63	-6	332	48	50	-2	
	04/05	1230	63			214	54			
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	617	48	50	-2	91	38	46	-7	
	03/04	560	49	52	-3	62	37	43	-6	
	04/05	357	64			36	47			
NVQs	02/03	26	50	51	-1	279	29	45	-16	
	03/04	32	56	54	3	135	53	47	6	
	04/05	37	51			402	44			
Other	02/03	102	60	55	4	2150	26	54	-28	
	03/04	332	74	56	18	1328	60	56	5	
	04/05	266	76			1131	67			