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17 November 2006

Richard Chambers  
Principal  
Lambeth College  
45 Clapham Common South Side  
London  
SW4 9BL

Dear Richard,

#### ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT

Following our visit on 16 November, I write to confirm the findings of the college's annual assessment visit. I attach feedback outlining the main conclusions. I hope you find this useful in continuing to improve provision at the college. I also attach the risk assessment from the visit.

Please make sure that you bring to our attention any factual inaccuracies in the feedback, by e-mail to [collegeinspections@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:collegeinspections@ofsted.gov.uk), within two working days of receiving this letter. If there is anything on which you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

May I thank you, your colleagues and students for making us feel so welcome during the visit. I look forward to meeting you again.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price HMI

cc. Central AAV unit  
Jill Lowery, Area Director, London Central LSC  
Sheila Brown HMI, Regional Divisional Manager, Ofsted  
Wilf Hudson Regional ADM, Ofsted  
Sue Gregory HMI, Patch ADM, Ofsted  
Michael Davis ALI

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Lambeth College  
Date of visit: 16 November 2006

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual assessment visit. It focuses on the themes explored during the visit and does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the college's performance.

### Achievement and standards

- Have success rates for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 1 and 2 improved in 2005/06?

At levels 1 and 2 success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 improved considerably in 2005/06. From a low base in 2004/05 they rose by 13 and 15 percentage points respectively. Both are now slightly above national averages. At level 3 success rates declined slightly and are now just below the national average. Although small numbers, success rates on short courses have remained low. In general retention rates are slightly above national averages, but pass rates have remained slightly below.

- Have key success rates improved in 2005/6?

The college has made the decision not to offer key skills. The requirement to complete a portfolio was considered too onerous for most students. Instead the college now insists that all learners aged 16 to 18 following level 1 and level 2 full time programmes participate in 2 hours a week of literacy and numeracy. Seventy two per cent of learners who were entered for the level 1 certificate in adult numeracy were successful and 68% for the equivalent literacy qualification. At level 2 the numeracy success rate is much lower at 46% but the literacy rate at 71% is high. The college does not offer key skills at level 3, nor any equivalent qualifications in information and communications technology (ICT).

- Has there been some improvement in attendance and punctuality?

The college rightly judged that the average attendance rate in 2004/05, at 73% was poor. To improve this, the college has introduced a new registration system. This is carefully monitored and daily outcomes are

made available on the college's staff intranet. At the time of the visit, very early in the academic year, the average rate of attendance was 81% with only the school of basic education significantly lower at 73%.

## Quality of education and training

- What progress has the college made in improving the proportion of teaching of learners aged 16 to 18 that is good or better?

The college's overall profile of teaching that is graded good or better has remained consistent, there is still too much unsatisfactory teaching. Whilst the college has made efforts to focus on improving teaching and learning for students aged 16 to 18 the results for 2005/06 indicate little progress.

Results of lesson observations are reported back to the senior management team. Teachers whose observation grades are inadequate are re-observed. Heads of curriculum areas provide relevant support or other actions are put in place. Since September 2006 the college has started to focus on re-observing grade three lessons in order to raise standards.

Some lesson observations appear, from an analysis of the evaluative records, to be graded too generously, with more of an emphasis being given to teaching than to learning. The college reports that key themes that arise out of the result of observations are collated and become areas for staff development across the college.

The impact of the measures taken by the college to improve teaching and learning is not yet evident.

- At the previous annual assessment visit (AAV) in 2005/06 it was outlined that inspectors would review the college's progress in improving the use of information and learning technology (ILT) and individual action planning in basic education. What progress has been made?

The college has developed an e-learning strategy. Learners' access to computers and the range of materials available on the staff intranet have improved. The reliability of the network is good and the college has invested considerable resources in both hardware and staffing. Whilst

students are increasingly using ICT, their capacity to use the current virtual learning environment is restricted. For example, learners are not able to access schemes of work or learning notes remotely. The college believes that the use of ILT in the classroom has improved significantly. However, except for lesson observations, where comments are not always made, there is no systematic auditing of current practice.

In basic education, in response to the comments made at the last inspection, a robust ILT development plan was completed. The college asserts that the use of ILT in this area and individual action planning are now good.

- In the 2004/5 self-assessment report (SAR) the college identified that further attention to the development of key and basic skills within vocational areas was required. What progress has the college made?

Within vocational schools, the college has developed a strategy that places the delivery of basic skills and additional learning support (ALS) alongside standard teaching practice. Under the direction of the director of student services, the heads of basic skills and additional learning support and their teams now work directly with curriculum teams. The approach has already had a positive impact on raising the proportion of learners achieving literacy and numeracy qualifications. However, it is too early to judge the overall effectiveness of the initiative.

## Leadership and management

- Low success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 were identified at the last AAV and they are also noted as an area to improve in the college's 2004/5 SAR. How is the college improving success rates on courses at levels 1 and 2?

Success rates improved significantly in 2005/06, as summarised under the achievements and standards section above. Subsequently, the curriculum area of business has taken further specific measures to improve success rates for learners aged 16 to 18. Measures include a new curriculum offer for learners at level 1 and 2 and the revision of its learner recruitment and initial assessment practices. These initiatives were put in place in September 2006; it is too early to assess the impact of these measures on success rates.

- In 2004/05 the college identified that variable implementation of quality assurance processes had led to underperformance in some areas. How has the college addressed this?

The college's senior management team have revised their quality assurance processes as part of their quality improvement strategy. New management procedures have now been put in place which includes student recruitment through to schools, services and accommodation. Members of the senior management team have clear responsibilities in relation to curriculum quality assurance. The vice principal of curriculum along with the directors of curriculum and student services now have direct line management responsibilities for heads of curriculum. Management meetings where strategic and operational issues are discussed are held fortnightly. Regular one-to-one meetings occur between senior managers and heads of department where the college monitors performance within curriculum areas against set targets. It is too early to judge the overall effectiveness of these actions.

The college is reviewing the organisation of student services in order to ensure an effective service for changing learners' needs.

Whilst there have been improvements in success rates for learners aged 16 to 18, achievements are now at the national averages. The college's own lesson observation scheme has not brought about significant improvement to the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.

Any themes from the pre-visit analysis not explored during the visit:

- No

Any other observations from the visit not identified in the pre-visit analysis:

- Since the last AAV the college has undergone much organisational change. The college's restructuring programme was undertaken primarily in response to the requirements by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for reductions in non-priority provision. As the college historically had the third highest adult student population in England, the impact of funding cuts was severe. The result of this has led to redundancies and a reshaping of the college's curriculum offer. The college is presently in stage two of its re-organisation and anticipates that further redundancies may have to follow.

The Principal and his senior management team have very clear strategies that will enable the college to respond to local circumstances, the LSC and employer requirements. However, it is too early to assess the full effect of these strategies.