



City of Westminster College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

Published
December 2006

Provider reference
130423

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Basic information about the college

Name of college: City of Westminster College

Type of college: General Further Education

Principal: Robin Shreeve

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Chair of governors: Jude Boardman

Unique reference number: 130423

Name of lead inspector: Michael Davis, ALI

Dates of inspection: 30 October – 3 November 2006

Background of the organisation

1. The City of Westminster College was established in 1903 and is the main provider of post-16 education and training in the Borough of Westminster. The college has five sites located in Paddington, Maida Vale and Queens Park. It operates in a culturally diverse area. A high proportion of learners are from areas classified as economically disadvantaged. There are large numbers of homeless people, refugees and asylum seekers within the borough.
2. The college offers provision from most subject sector areas. Courses range from entry level to higher education. In 2005/06, the college recruited 8,426 learners. Approximately 30% were aged 16-18, the majority studying on a full-time basis. About 68% of learners were adults, most of whom followed part-time courses. In 2005/06, approximately 123 students from local schools followed vocational taster courses with another 40 young people excluded from school, attending a pupil referral unit. Some 57% of the learners are male. The college has 73% of learners from minority ethnic communities with Black African and Black Caribbean learners forming the largest single minority ethnic groups. Approximately 45% of the college's learners have a first language other than English. Overall, 36% of the college's learners reside in Westminster. There is extensive provision for groups that are under-represented in further education. The college is a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for digital media technology.
3. The college's mission is "to provide the best possible education and training opportunities, enabling learners from all backgrounds to achieve their personal and professional goals, and, in so doing, contribute to local and national economic development and prosperity".

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: science and mathematics; construction; information and communication technology (ICT); arts, media and performing arts; English and social sciences; English for speakers of other languages (ESOL); and business and management.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: grade 3
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3

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

Science and mathematics	Satisfactory: grade 3
Construction	Satisfactory: grade 3
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: grade 3
Arts, media and performing arts	Satisfactory: grade 3
English and social sciences	Good: grade 2
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	Satisfactory: grade 3
Business and management	Satisfactory: grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

5. This is a satisfactory college. Since the last inspection, success rates have risen and are now mostly at or around the national averages. Learner progress on A and AS provision, relative to their prior achievement, is good. On many programmes, learner attendance and punctuality still remain a problem. Progression rates to higher levels of provision are good on many courses. The general standard of learners' work is satisfactory.
6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but too few lessons are good or outstanding. Efforts to improve teaching and learning have not had sufficient impact. In the better lessons, teachers plan effectively and skilfully change activities. However, many teachers do not take sufficient account of individual learners' needs. There is insufficient use of information learning technology (ILT) or individualised learning.
7. The college response to social and educational inclusion is good. Approximately 45% of learners do not have English as their first language. The college provides a safe and welcoming environment and attracts learners from across London. The range of provision is satisfactory, but the adult offer has significantly reduced since funding cuts. Provision at level 3 is good. Responsiveness to employers' needs is satisfactory.
8. The college provides satisfactory impartial guidance and support for its learners. Tutoring is satisfactory, but inconsistent. Initial assessment is effective, but not all learners identified as having additional learning support needs receive appropriate help. Individual target-setting is often ineffective. Strategies to monitor and support learners at risk of leaving their course are not yet fully developed.
9. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and governors set a clear direction for the college. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection and are now at or around national averages. The pace of progress has been slow in a number of areas. Some weaknesses identified at the last inspection still remain. Financial management is good and the self-assessment process is well established.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: grade 3

10. The capacity of the college to improve is satisfactory. Overall success rates have steadily improved and now track the national averages for colleges of a similar type. Quality assurance procedures are improving and lessons observed more frequently. However, the standards of teaching have not improved sufficiently and actions for improvement lack prioritisation. Unlike the last

inspection in 2002, no curriculum areas are unsatisfactory. The college is in a sound financial position and has well considered plans to replace its accommodation and improve resources.

11. The college's self-assessment report for 2004/05 was over descriptive, but did identify most of the college's main strengths and weaknesses. Updates and position statements prepared prior to the inspection show greater maturity and are more analytical.

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

12. The college has made satisfactory efforts to improve the issues raised in the inspection. The three curriculum areas graded as unsatisfactory have improved and are now satisfactory. Success rates have steadily risen and quality assurance procedures are now more comprehensive, although not yet fully effective. The level of unsatisfactory teaching on courses for 16-18 year olds has reduced, but there has been little improvement overall. Tutorials continue to be inconsistent. Literacy, numeracy and language support is provided more promptly, but not comprehensively. Access for learners with limited mobility is now at least satisfactory.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- good leadership and strategic planning
- welcoming and inclusive college
- good financial management
- good progress relative to prior achievement at AS and A level
- highly effective external partnerships and community links
- good provision in English and social sciences
- high quality digital imaging resources.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- pace of progress
- quality assurance arrangements
- standards of teaching and learning
- target setting and monitoring for individual learners
- provision and monitoring of additional learning support
- level 1 success rates for learners aged 16-18
- attendance and punctuality
- teaching accommodation in some curriculum areas
- sharing of good practice.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

13. Overall success rates for long courses are at or around national averages for similar colleges. Over a four year period from 2002 to 2006, success rates improved by approximately eight percentage points, but national averages also rose by a similar margin. In 2005/06, retention rates stayed around national averages whilst pass rates rose very slightly. Short course success rates remain well below national averages. However, a significant proportion of this provision is for the homeless. Success rates for 16-18 year olds at level 1 have remained low since the last inspection with level 2 and level 3 success rates very slightly above the national averages. Adult provision at level 1 is above national averages and has improved considerably from a low base, whilst level 2 and level 3 success rates are mostly at the national average.
14. Most learners from minority ethnic groups achieve at acceptable levels, but the success rates of Black African and Black Caribbean learners at level 1 remain low. For GCE A level provision over a four year period, learners' progress relative to their GCSE scores has remained high. The college has made little progress in developing distance travelled measures for vocational provision. Work-based learning is limited in scope. The college's very small apprenticeship provision has been discontinued. Over the last three years, there were very few framework completions. Entry to employment (E2E) provision is well established. Achievement and progression rates are satisfactory, but some individual targets are not sufficiently challenging. Key skills success rates have improved, but are still below the national average. In 2005/06, the proportion of school students aged 14-16 that followed GCSE vocational courses at the college and achieved an A-C grade, was very low. However, achievements on college accredited vocational programmes are high. In 2004/05, learner attendance was acceptable although averaged below 80 percentage points. However, this dropped to around 70% for level 1 provision. Punctuality and attendance on many courses remains a problem. Progression rates to higher levels of provision are good on many courses.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but very few lessons are good or better. In the better lessons, teachers plan effectively and demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of their subject area. In these lessons, teachers provide a good range of materials and skilfully change activities to meet the group and individual learner needs. Learners are motivated and enjoy their lessons. In ESOL and business administration, for example, learners develop good practical skills. The teaching and learning of key skills have improved.
16. The weaker lessons are characterised by poor planning, unimaginative teaching methods and ineffective checks on learning. In too many lessons, teaching

activities do not challenge more able learners or address the needs of the less able. In lessons, many teachers talk for long periods. Poor learner punctuality and attendance are often disruptive and negatively impact on learning. The college has introduced a more rigorous and regular system for observing teachers, but it is too early to assess the impact of the scheme.

17. Teaching resources are mostly satisfactory, but very good in digital media, music and performing arts. Standards of classrooms vary enormously, but are often poor at the college's Maida Vale site. In some curriculum areas, teaching takes place in very cramped conditions. The college has increased ICT for learners, but the use of ILT in the classroom is insufficient. The college has developed a new ILT strategy, but it is too early to assess its impact.
18. Arrangements for initial assessment are mostly good. The assessment of learners is quick and most receive appropriate support. Learning support assistants provide effective support in the classroom. On-course assessment and monitoring practices are mostly good. Learners' work is assessed regularly. In some areas, however, assessment does not always provide sufficiently detailed feedback to enable learners to progress. Some learners receive marked work late. Formal progress reviews take place in all curriculum areas. These give learners the opportunity to comment on their performance and to identify and agree future targets. In some areas, targets for improvement lack precision and/or challenge. Many tutors do not use learning support targets effectively. Arrangements for reporting progress to parents and carers are satisfactory. Arrangements for internal verification and addressing weaknesses identified in external verification reports are effective.
19. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. The college provides a safe and welcoming environment and attracts learners from across London. A high proportion of learners come from deprived areas and approximately 45% do not have English as their first language. The college has strong collaborative partnerships with local schools, community groups and employers. In some curriculum areas, for example creative arts, the college responds to employer needs well. However, as some curriculum areas no longer offer any part-time or short course provision, the needs of local employers are not fully met. To address this, the college plans to expand its full-cost recovery provision. Provision for 14-16 year olds is satisfactory and includes a pupil referral unit, two vocational GCSE's and taster courses. Work-based learning provision is limited, although there is a satisfactory E2E programme. The college has good labour market intelligence, and course publicity and marketing are generally effective. The curriculum offer for 16-18 year olds is coherent with appropriate progression routes. Provision for disadvantaged groups such the homeless and ESOL learners is satisfactory. The range of enrichment activities is appropriate. Learners value opportunities for work experience but in some curriculum areas opportunities are restricted.
20. The college provides satisfactory guidance and support for learners. The provision of initial impartial advice and guidance is good. Good links with local

schools support this process. Induction arrangements are generally effective. The college's student advisers provide good financial and welfare support. Good use is made of external specialist services. Additional support for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and for dyslexic learners is good. Appropriate initial assessment arrangements accurately identify additional learning support needs in literacy, language and numeracy. However, not all learners identified as having additional learning support needs receive the support they require. When provided, the college does not adequately monitor the effectiveness of additional learning support. Learners receive good academic and pastoral support from their tutors and subject teachers. The tutorial programme offers good opportunities for personal and social education, but its implementation across the college is not consistent. The use of individual learning plans and target setting is often ineffective. Initiatives to address poor punctuality and attendance have had insufficient impact. Strategies to monitor and support learners at risk of leaving their course are not fully developed. The college is in the process of improving its careers and higher education guidance service.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

21. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the appointment of a new principal in August 2005, the college has undergone a period of considerable change. This includes a management restructure and revision of key policies. The principal and governors work together well and have set a clear strategic direction for the college. Communication is good. Staff are regularly consulted and are aware of the reasons for change. Strategies to promote effective team work are beginning to impact. Overall success rates have improved since the last inspection and in recent years stayed in line with the national averages for colleges of a similar type. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced, but the proportion of good or better teaching remains low.
22. Governors have appropriate experience and commitment. They have played a key role in developing the college's ambitious accommodation strategy. Governors monitor the college's financial position carefully and receive timely reports on the academic performance. However, governors do not clearly identify or prioritise areas for improvement.
23. The college has a wide range of quality assurance procedures. However, as identified in the college's self-assessment report, their implementation and subsequent action plans have not had sufficient impact. The college has recently strengthened its central quality assurance team, primarily to improve teaching and learning. The frequency of lesson observations has increased and they now form an integral part of the college's performance management system. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these and other initiatives. Overall, management at the curriculum level is adequate, but managers do not prioritise areas for improvement sufficiently. Many do not use management information effectively.

24. The college promotes its strategy for meeting local and wider needs through a wide range of partnership and working arrangements with local schools. Social and educational inclusion is good. Collaboration with a range of employers is helping the college diversify its income streams.
25. Resources are adequate overall, but in some areas good. The three main sites, however, are no longer fit for purpose and some accommodation is cramped. The college's ambitious accommodation strategy is underpinned by expert professional advice. Despite intentions to vacate or demolish most college buildings, expenditure on resources is adequate. Learning resources centres provide appropriate facilities to support learning.
26. The college's response to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 has been satisfactory. Most parts of college buildings are now accessible. Performance of learners by age, gender and ethnicity is monitored, but action planning to meet different groups' needs is of variable quality. In response to the Education Act (safeguarding children) 2002 and the Children Act 2004, the college has developed appropriate policies. Staff are vetted for their suitability. Governors and staff have undertaken child protection training and are clearly aware of their role and responsibilities. Bullying and harassment policies are in place and appropriately implemented.
27. Financial management is good. Expenditure is carefully controlled. Although the college continues to be financially robust, its position has deteriorated slightly due to accommodation strategy costs. Accurate management information is used well to support financial planning and to allocate resources. Despite the limitations of the college's buildings, space utilisation is good. However, taking into account the standards of teaching and learning and overall success rates, the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Curriculum area inspections

Science and mathematics

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

28. The college offers GCSE and advanced level mathematics and science courses at the Maida Vale centre. There are 154 full-time learners on these programmes. In addition, 20 adult learners are enrolled on intensive A level courses in mathematics, chemistry and biology. GCSE mathematics and human biology are offered in the evening. Some 70 learners follow vocational and applied science courses at intermediate or advanced levels and 37 adult learners follow the access to life science course. Vocational science teaching takes place at the Cosway Centre. In total, 305 learners aged 16-19 and 114 adults are studying mathematics and science.

STRENGTHS

- high pass rates on GCSE science courses
- high success rate on AS mathematics courses
- good progress on GCE AS and A level courses relative to prior achievement
- comprehensive assessment, marking and feedback to help learners improve
- good range of courses to enable adults to progress
- good guidance and support for learners.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates on A level courses in 2006
- very poor retention of adults in 2006
- poor use of questioning techniques in lessons
- ineffective planning of lessons
- unsuitable laboratory accommodation at the Maida Vale centre.

Achievement and standards

29. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Although pass rates have increased since the last inspection, retention rates decreased significantly in 2005/06, particularly for adults. On GCSE chemistry, biology and mathematics, pass rates are high although low for adults following GCSE mathematics. In 2005/06, many AS and A level pass rates were high and above national averages. However, retention rates on many A level courses were low. On AS mathematics, success rates are high. Learners on AS and A level courses consistently make good progress relative to their prior achievement. Success rates on vocational and access courses are satisfactory. Learners' work is mostly satisfactory. Retained learners enjoy learning.

Quality of provision

30. Most teaching is satisfactory. Homework is set regularly and work is marked carefully. Written comments are constructive and help learners to improve. In the best lessons, learners receive good individual guidance. Frequent tests and assignments inform learners of their progress. However, too much teaching fails to involve learners sufficiently and relies too much on explanations from the teacher. Too often, teachers do not question learners adequately and opportunities for discussion are limited. Some teachers do not plan lessons and courses in enough detail.
31. The college offers a good range of courses. Progression to higher education is good, particularly from the access course. Support for learners is good. Target grades are set and learners' progress is checked. Communication between subject teachers and personal tutors is good. Teachers provide considerable additional help outside of lessons. Learners identified as needing language, numeracy or dyslexia support, attend additional workshops. The individual learning plans used to track the progress of these learners are highly effective.

Leadership and management

32. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is accurate, but focuses insufficiently on the quality of teaching. While procedures are in place for lesson observation and to review staff performance, their effectiveness is limited. Courses are generally well organised, but good practice is not always shared. Some laboratory accommodation and furniture is unsuitable.

Construction

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

33. The college offers long qualifications in plumbing and electrical installation at levels 2 and 3, building services at level 3 and short courses in electrical installation. In total, 503 learners are following construction courses. Approximately 21 learners are full-time. The remainder attend day release or evening only provision. Some 67 learners are aged 16-18. There are 13 students from a local school following a plumbing taster course. Over half of the learners are from minority ethnic groups.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates
- good rates of progression to higher education
- good recent leadership and management.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ineffective initial assessment
- insufficient variety in theory lessons
- insufficient work-related qualifications.

Achievement and standards

34. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates are generally high. The majority of courses have retention and pass rates above national averages. In 2005/06, success rates on the plumbing certificate and national certificate were 81% and 63% respectively; well above the national averages. The level 2 electrical programme also had a high success rate. Pass rates for short courses are high. Standards of learners' work are satisfactory. Learners present their written work well. Practical work is at a standard expected by employers. Punctuality is good, but some classes have low attendance.

Quality of the provision

35. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Practical sessions are generally good. Learners receive good support and constructive feedback. Resources are satisfactory. Practical workshops are fit for purpose and theory rooms well appointed. In the better theory lessons, teachers use a variety of activities and support learners well. However, these lessons are in the minority. In general, activities are not sufficiently varied and learners spend too much time on worksheets. In some lessons, few learners contribute and teachers fail to check individuals' understanding. Some teachers use data projectors and computers to good effect. However, others only rely on transparencies which contain text and no colour. Resources are generally satisfactory, although in some areas there are insufficient consumables.

36. The provision is satisfactory. However, the current range is not sufficient to meet the needs of learners planning to enter employment. For example, the college does not offer either national vocational qualifications (NVQs) or apprenticeships. Learners are not clear about industry requirements or that NVQs are increasingly the minimum standard. The college provides good opportunities for progression. In 2005/06, 10 of the 14 who completed the national certificate progressed to the higher national level.
37. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Personal support is good, but initial assessment is weak and learning plans are not useful. Teachers and learners view the initial assessment test as primarily a means for selection. The test assesses learners' literacy and numeracy at too low a level, particularly where level 3 courses demand good mathematical skills. Learners who experience difficulty receive support, but this is too reliant on referrals. Some learners are not aware of what support is available. Assessment and verification are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

38. Leadership and management are good. The new management team has rapidly identified strengths and areas for improvement. The position statement produced prior to the inspection was accurate and complemented the old self-assessment report. The curriculum teams are aware of the limitations of the curriculum and plan future developments. Recent lesson observations agreed with the weaknesses identified during the inspection.

Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

39. The college offers vocational full-time certificate and diploma courses from levels 1 to 3, for both IT users and practitioners. There are 177 learners aged 16-18 and 50 adults following these courses. Another 55 learners aged 16-18 are following AS or A level courses in ICT or computing. The college also offers an access to computing course. There are 18 adults on this programme.

STRENGTHS

- high retention rates for adult learners
- good range of full-time courses in response to employer and learner needs
- good enrichment programme
- highly effective learning support in lessons.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates for 16-18 year olds on many courses
- slow pace and variety of approach in many lessons
- poor use of target setting in individual learning plans
- insufficient departmental focus on improving teaching and learning.

Achievements and standards

40. Success rates are satisfactory overall. In 2005/06, however, success rates for 16-18 year old learners fell below national averages. Success rates have been consistently low for the last three years for the AS in information and technology course. On many courses, retention and some success rates for adult learners are well above national averages. Most learners demonstrate good practical skills and the standard of assignment work is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most learners are well motivated and contribute readily to classroom discussions. Working relationships between teachers and learners are good. In the weaker lessons, teachers talk too much, the pace is slow and the range of activities employed does not maintain learner interest. Many whole class exercises do not challenge the most able learners. Most assignments rely on simulations and teachers seldom mention the real applications of ICT to industry or business.
42. The range of full-time courses is wide and responsive to employer and learner needs. There are good career path opportunities at all levels. However, the college no longer offers what was extensive short course and part-time provision. There are plans to reintroduce some of this provision as full cost recovery. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Full-time learners are

encouraged and supported to undertake work experience with voluntary groups. The links with the ministry of defence are strong and effective and a mobile phone company regularly provides talks about ICT career opportunities and business applications.

43. Learner guidance and support are satisfactory. ICT staff provide high levels of individual support. The provision of learning support is good and there is some effective team teaching at level 1. In 2005/06, 83% of learners that received additional literacy or numeracy support passed their course. Target setting is ineffective and does not motivate learners. Many learners are unaware of the standard of work required to obtain a high course grade.

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A newly created team is aware of the limited progress since the last inspection. The most recent self-assessment report provides an accurate analysis of the provision. The development plan is comprehensive and the team is making good progress. Teachers are appropriately qualified for the full range of courses. Departmental strategies to improve teaching and learning are ineffective on some courses. There is no formal process to share best practice.

Art, media and performing Arts

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

45. The college offers mainly full-time courses in the visual arts, performance arts and media. These include art and design, performing arts, media, photography, video production, music technology and digital media arts. There is no provision at level 1. At level 2, there are 125 learners and 2,614 at level 3. Of these, 38% are adults. In addition, 36 school students aged 14-16 attend taster courses. Seven follow a work-based learning programme. Approximately 100 learners follow non-accredited full cost courses. Music production, music technology and photography are offered at level 4. The college is a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for digital media technology.

STRENGTHS

- good pass rates
- high quality specialist resources in digital media, music and performing arts
- good strategic development of the curriculum to meet vocational needs.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- poor learner punctuality
- insufficient planning of learning to meet individual needs
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Achievements and standards

46. Learners' achievements are satisfactory. Success rates for 16-18 year olds and adult learners have generally matched the improving national averages between 2002 and 2006. Success rates in music technology are close to low national averages. Retention rates are satisfactory and have steadily improved. Pass rates are good. In 2004/05, 90% of completing adult learners achieved, compared to 87% for 16-18 year old learners. In work-based learning, success rates are satisfactory. Attendance is generally satisfactory as is learners' work. Learners acquire appropriate contextual understanding, practical skills and awareness of vocational standards. Progression to further study is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships between staff and learners are good on most courses. In the best lessons, curriculum planning is good and teachers use primary sources to stimulate learning. In these lessons, teachers manage learners' aspirations and behaviour very effectively. However, in many lessons, the planning of learning is underdeveloped and teaching and learning strategies do not sufficiently meet all learners' needs. Poor punctuality in many lessons has a negative impact on learning. Assessment, internal verification and the monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. Teachers are well

qualified. Technical support is good. Specialist resources in digital media, music and performing arts are very good. Resources provided through the CoVE in digital media are good and well used. The Cockpit Theatre is a good resource. It provides professional event opportunities for performing arts and music technology learners.

48. The curriculum offer is satisfactory and provides suitable progression opportunities. Students participate in a good range of innovative and vocationally relevant enrichment activities. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Recruitment and selection processes are generally adequate. The design of the tutorial programme is satisfactory, but attendance rates at some group tutorials are low. Students receive timely and appropriate additional learning support where required.

Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management of the area has been significantly re-organised. Some posts remain unfilled and not all management roles and responsibilities are yet clear. Good strategic developments include the curriculum and effective links with industry and the local community. Although the teaching of key skills has improved, other quality initiatives have yet to impact. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. The self-assessment report is satisfactory. Inspectors agreed with most of the report, but some highlighted strengths are just norms.

English and social sciences

Good: grade 2

Context

50. The college offers a range of GCSE, GCE AS and A-level English and social science courses. At advanced level, courses include English, psychology, sociology, history, law and economics. Most courses are a year long, but there are a small number of intensive advanced level courses. GCSE English is offered in the evening. There is some short course provision. A small number of local school students aged 16-18 follow an advanced level course in psychology. At the time of inspection, there were 453 learners aged 16-18 of whom 77 were part-time and 64 adult learners of whom 35 were part-time.

STRENGTHS

- high and improving success rates
- good attainment on GCE AS and A level courses relative to prior achievement
- good monitoring and assessment of learners' work.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ineffective quality assurance systems to secure improvement
- insufficient learner participation in some lessons.

Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are good. Most success rates are high and improving. However, on a minority of the English courses, success rates are just below national averages for the sector. Learners' attainment relative to their prior achievements has remained high for most advanced courses, with the exception of some English provision. In most lessons, learners make good progress. The standard of learners' oral work is good, but some written work shows a lack of idea development. Learners enjoy their lessons, but punctuality remains an issue.

Quality of provision

52. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons, ILT is used effectively and learners enthusiastically take part in role-playing activities. In other lessons, learners discuss difficult concepts well and develop good research skills. However, in a minority of lessons, there is insufficient variety in teaching and learning activities. Too much reliance is placed on learners reading handouts at speed. In some lessons, a significant proportion of learners do not fully participate. The setting, marking and assessment of learners' work are good. The development of examination skills and opportunities for examination practice is mostly good but inconsistently applied.

53. The range of provision offered meets the needs and interest of learners. The provision of A-level psychology to local school learners, through a well developed consortium arrangement, is successful. Higher education progression rates are high for learners from non-traditional backgrounds.
54. Learners receive good academic support and guidance. Tutoring is effective. Formal target-setting and monitoring arrangements are satisfactory. However, not all learners are sufficiently clear on how to improve academic performance. Provision is highly inclusive, both educationally and socially, but the provision of learning support is sometimes unsatisfactory.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are mostly good. Since the last inspection, significant progress has taken place in all areas, particularly in social sciences. Quality assurance systems have improved, but there is limited evidence of their direct impact on standards. Learner surveys are regular, but some concerns relating to teaching and learning are still evident. Lesson observations now take place more regularly. Course evaluations are thorough and self-assessment is accurate. The development plan is comprehensive, but lacks sufficient detail of how some aspects of teaching and learning are to be improved.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

56. The college offers discrete ESOL provision from entry level to level 2. In addition there are ESOL vocational courses at the Queens Park centre in business, IT and childcare. Most courses are full-time and part-time. There are 713 adult learners and 74 learners aged 16-18. Adult learners can follow the certificate in ESOL skills for life or individual modules from it, and/or certificates in adult literacy or numeracy. Most learners aged 16-18 follow the skills for working life certificate.

STRENGTHS

- good development of speaking and listening skills
- very effective pastoral support
- good range of courses to enable learners to progress.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- poor setting of individual targets
- weak recording and monitoring of learners' progress
- poor resources.

Achievement and standards

57. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on individual ESOL courses are mostly satisfactory, but learners' attendance is often erratic. With so many learners joining and leaving the programme it is often difficult for some learners to improve all four language skills. However, most learners that stay on the course do achieve their planned outcomes and progress onto another course. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory and appropriate to their ability. Learners make satisfactory progress in lessons. They gain confidence in speaking and listening skills and learn how to communicate in everyday situations.

Quality of provision

58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers use varied activities and there is frequent checking of learning. On ESOL vocational courses, the better lessons build on the vocational aspects of the course. In the weaker lessons, teachers use a narrow range of activities and unstimulating teaching materials. Some learners are not set challenging targets and in many lessons there is a lack of timing and pace.
59. Learners undertake a good initial assessment that effectively places them on the right level class. The results from a further diagnostic assessment, however, are not always used effectively. Targets are not always specific enough to

address individual learning needs. In many lessons, the recording and monitoring of learners' progress is not effective. Poor punctuality impacts negatively on individual and group progress.

60. There is a good range of ESOL courses and well designed pathways for progression. Support and guidance are satisfactory, and the pastoral support ESOL learners receive is very effective. Learners have good access to additional learning support, tutorials, learner advisors and childcare facilities. However, some entry level learners are not clear about these resources. Learners aged 16-18 have dedicated learning support assistants in the classroom to support them. Many access wider enrichment opportunities. ESOL learners feel that the college provides a safe and welcoming environment.

Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new managers have introduced regular team meetings and an open door policy for staff and learners. Staff development opportunities are improving. Teachers are encouraged and supported to update or improve their qualifications. The mentoring scheme for new tutors is good. However, there is little sharing of good practice. The observation of teaching and learning has not led to sufficient improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Some resources are poor. Classrooms are often cramped, insufficient use is made of ILT resources and some teaching resources are inadequate. The pre-inspection self-assessment report was mostly accurate and identified most issues.

Business and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

62. Two separate schools within the college offer full-time business and management courses at levels 2 and 3. The management school at Maida Vale offers part-time courses in accounts and marketing at a third site. The business school at Queens Park also offers courses at level 1. In the business school, language support is integral to full-time courses. There are no part-time courses in the business school and no short course provision. There are 87 learners aged 16-18 and 162 adults in the business school and 261 learners aged 16-18 and 187 adults in the management school.

STRENGTHS

- very high and improving success rates for A level courses
- good workplace skills for NVO level 2 administration learners
- good language and literacy support at Queens Park site.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- insufficient stimulating teaching
- insufficient sharing of good practice across the sites
- poor accommodation.

Achievement and standards

63. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for 16-18 year olds and adult learners are mostly satisfactory, but for A level courses are very high and improving. Most adult learners that complete a professional part-time course achieve. Success rates on other vocational courses are satisfactory. Many learners progress to higher levels of study, but few move between schools or sites. Attendance and punctuality, except for the A level classes, are often poor. Generally, learners develop appropriate skills and NVO level 2 administration learners gain good workplace skills.

Quality of provision

64. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In better lessons, planning is good and learners undertake varied and interesting activities. There are some good examples of group work. However, in other lessons teaching is dull and learners have to listen passively while the teacher talks. In these lessons, questioning often lacks precision with too great a focus on examination requirements. ILT resources, such as interactive whiteboards, are sometimes available, but not always used. At one site, the cramped accommodation makes it difficult for the teacher or learners to move around the classroom.

65. The range of full-time provision is satisfactory. The newly introduced national certificate and diploma qualifications better meet the needs and interests of learners. However, the college no longer offers any part-time, specialist or short courses, professional courses being the exception. Links with employers are satisfactory, but the current provision does not meet demand. There are some good enrichment opportunities. For example, BTEC diploma groups study a European foreign language and work collaboratively with learners from a German college. Full-time learners all follow key skills qualifications. Learners at the Queens Park site can follow ESOL qualifications if appropriate.
66. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners at Queens Park receive good support for their literacy and language needs. At Maida Vale, learners value support from their tutors, for example, in completing UCAS applications. Tutorials are generally satisfactory, but the quality is variable.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, there is no overall management of the business provision. Similar courses at levels 2 and 3 are offered by both schools. The mechanisms for assuring the quality of teaching and learning are in place, but not yet fully effective. The arrangements for reviewing the provision are clear and understood by staff. The pre-inspection self-assessment report was mostly accurate. The sharing of good practice, teaching staff and other resources are weak.

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	658	55	55	0	811	46	53	-7
	03/04	891	55	59	-4	1019	48	59	-11
	04/05	696	58	62	-4	969	56	61	-5
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	111	56	56	0	3	0	45	-45
	03/04	111	65	63	2	7	43	53	-10
	04/05	117	53	64	-11	5	60		
NVQs	02/03	1	0	58	-58	15	67	60	7
	03/04	2	100	61	39	10	90	66	24
	04/05	7	43	65	-22	10	80	71	9
Other	02/03	546	54	55	-1	793	46	53	-7
	03/04	778	54	59	-5	1002	48	58	-10
	04/05	572	59	61	-2	954	56	61	-5

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				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	02/03	935	55	51	4	856	56	50	6
	03/04	905	56	56	0	785	56	54	2
	04/05	836	60	60	0	818	58	60	-2
GCSEs	02/03	310	71	58	13	126	56	54	2
	03/04	234	71	64	7	116	58	57	1
	04/05	235	72	65	7	165	59	63	-4
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	209	47	54	-7	46	52	47	5
	03/04	157	61	60	1	31	77	56	21
	04/05	168	63	66	-3	25	56	62	-6
NVQs	02/03	74	51	42	9	143	56	49	7
	03/04	13	46	50	-4	60	52	54	-2
	04/05	28	46	56	-10	91	74	62	12
Other	02/03	342	46	48	-2	541	56	49	7
	03/04	501	49	53	-4	578	54	53	1
	04/05	405	54	58	-4	537	55	57	-2

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				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	02/03	1156	59	59	0	1374	55	50	5
	03/04	1668	62	61	1	1038	53	53	0
	04/05	1730	68	65	3	939	60	56	4
A/A2 Levels	02/03	355	81	81	0	191	69	67	2
	03/04	376	82	84	-2	133	68	69	-1
	04/05	398	81	85	-4	150	64	73	-9
AS Levels	02/03	759	56	58	-2	197	54	47	7
	03/04	852	57	60	-3	149	53	50	3
	04/05	857	68	64	4	165	56	53	3
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	308	47	47	0	306	57	45	12
	03/04	185	59	50	9	122	34	43	-9
	04/05	181	62	59	3	56	50	51	-1
NVQs	02/03					120	64	43	21
	03/04					29	48	48	0
	04/05					24	67	54	13
Other	02/03					560	48	51	-3
	03/04					605	54	54	0
	04/05					544	61	56	5

Table 4

1. Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the college 2003/04 to 2005/06

Year	Number of starts in year	Achieved objectives rate *	Progression rate **	Still in learning
2003/04	265	78	23	0
2004/05	166	54	55	0
2005/06	126	56	52	0

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period