

South Thames College

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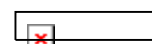
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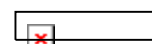
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Basic information about the college

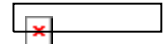


Name of college:	South Thames College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Susan Rimmer
Address of college:	South Thames College of Further Education Wandsworth High Street London SW18 2PP
Telephone number:	020 8918 7777
Fax number:	020 8918 7136
Chair of governors:	Godfrey Allen
Unique reference number:	130420
Name of reporting inspector:	Michael John Davis
Dates of inspection:	17-21 January 2005

Part A: Summary



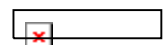
Information about the college



South Thames College is a large general further education (FE) college. It is by far the largest provider of post-16 education and training in the London borough of Wandsworth. The college offers provision at its five main centres in Wandsworth, Tooting, Putney, Roehampton and Battersea and through a network of community venues. The offer is wide and covers most of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) areas of learning. The majority of courses lead to nationally recognised qualifications. The provision ranges from pre-entry level to level 3 and in some cases to level 4. The college has been awarded interim Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status in music technology and in career pathways in the National Health Service in collaboration with other London colleges. Most courses are vocationally orientated, but the offer also includes an Increased Flexibility (IF) programme for school pupils, franchised English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision and English courses for overseas students. Modern apprenticeships are offered in hairdressing, childcare, electrical and motor vehicle. The college is also a provider of adult and community learning and manages the London Central Ufi Hub.

The college serves some of the most disadvantaged wards in south west London. Most of the college's students live locally. In 2003/04, 73% of the 18,000 students who followed courses lived in areas classified as being socially disadvantaged. Over 1,000 full-time students were aged 16 to 19, but the majority of students were adults with a substantial number over the age of 60. Nearly two thirds of students are female and approximately 50% are from minority ethnic groups. The college's mission is to deliver high-quality, learner-centred and business-focused education and training that responds to the cultural diversity of our community and to the needs of the local economy.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the provision to be good in two curriculum areas and satisfactory in seven curriculum areas. Work-based learning was judged to be unsatisfactory in construction. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- good leadership
- effective management of change
- continuous improvements over the last two years
- good management of resources

- good success rates on adult courses
- wide range of provision that enables progression
- teaching that builds students' confidence and self-esteem
- good support for students
- good information and communications technology (ICT) and modern foreign languages/English as a foreign language (EFL) provision.

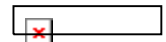
What should be improved

- retention rates on many courses and some pass rates for students aged 16 to 18
- students' punctuality to lessons and overall attendance
- key skills teaching and the very poor achievements
- ineffectiveness of some quality assurance arrangements
- low proportion of good or better lessons
- teachers' limited use of information and learning technology (ILT)
- standard of teaching for students aged 16 to 18

- curriculum management in some areas
- management of work-based learning in construction.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Construction	Satisfactory. The contributory grade for work-based learning is unsatisfactory . Retention and pass rates are high on electrical installation short courses. Teaching and learning for adults are mostly satisfactory, but in many lessons teaching is insufficiently demanding. Plumbing students achieve high standards of practical skills. Resources for learning in college and the workplace are good, but some work practices in carpentry are unsafe. The management of work-based learning is weak.
Business administration and management	Satisfactory. Pass rates are high on general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) intermediate business and certificate in administration level 1 courses, but low in book-keeping and accounts. Much teaching is good, but there are insufficient strategies to ensure vocational relevance. The provision is organised flexibly and meets learners' needs. Procedures for monitoring students' progress on business courses are unsatisfactory.
Information and communications technology	Good. Retention and pass rates on advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) information technology (IT) and diploma for IT practitioner courses are high, but low on GNVQ foundation ICT. Teaching is good on adult IT courses and support for full-time students is good. The range of courses is wide and progression rates are good. On full-time courses, attendance and punctuality are poor.
Health, social and child care	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high on many courses, but in 2004 three courses had low pass rates. Theory and practical skills are well integrated, but in a minority of lessons the work set by the teacher is insufficiently demanding. Career pathways and progression are good; students receive good support. Quality assurance is weak on a few courses and generally student attendance and punctuality is poor.
Art and design	Satisfactory. Pass rates on many courses such as first diploma art

	and design are 100%, but the retention rate on the national certificate in photography was low. Teaching is mostly satisfactory, but many teachers use only a limited range of strategies. Students receive good individual support and there are effective progression pathways in multimedia. Students' punctuality is poor.
Media, music and performing arts	Satisfactory. Pass rates are mostly satisfactory, but retention rates on several courses are low. Teaching in dance is demanding and stimulating. However, in some lessons, classroom management is weak. Resources in music technology and support for students are good. On most courses, student attendance and punctuality are poor.
Modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language	Good. Pass rates on most courses and retention rates on EFL courses are high. However, retention rates are low on most advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) courses in modern foreign languages. Much teaching is good and teachers closely monitor students' progress. The wide and responsive range of courses is well managed. Many classrooms have inadequate facilities for using ILT.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. Students generally make good progress and develop good personal and learning skills. Pass rates in key skills are very low. Teaching is mostly satisfactory, but good in discrete lessons. Quality assurance arrangements are not fully effective and assessment is not adequately used to set and review targets. The range of provision is wide and students receive good literacy and numeracy support.
English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. Students achieve well on vocational ESOL courses and benefit from effective language support. Students' confidence and motivation are successfully developed, but opportunities to speak and listen are underdeveloped. Teaching is mostly satisfactory, but insufficient attention is paid to individual learning needs. Quality assurance is ineffective and systems for measuring students' progress and achievements are inadequate.

How well is the college led and managed?

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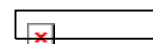
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal provides good leadership and the senior management team are effective. The college has made good progress in addressing most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Student pass and retention rates are improving and rates for adult students are above the national average. Key skills pass rates are very poor. Governance is good. Senior managers and governors set a clear, strategic direction for the college. The college's promotion of equality and diversity is good. The provision has been successfully redesigned to widen participation. Curriculum management and quality assurance are mostly satisfactory. However, targets and performance indicators in implementation plans are not always sufficiently precise and different plans are not always well aligned. The proportion of good or better teaching is below the national average. The self-assessment report was mostly accurate, but the grades were overgenerous. The management of resources is good. The college provides value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

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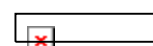
The college's response to education and social inclusion is good. It has successfully widened participation and extended its provision to provide progression routes from entry level to level 4. An increased emphasis on vocational courses is supportive of younger learners and students with ESOL, literacy and numeracy needs. Timetables and course start dates are responsive to students' personal circumstances. The availability of crèches and generally good support helps students to succeed. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Good practice is found in many curriculum areas. Data are regularly analysed by ethnicity, disability and gender and are used to guide actions. The proportion of students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds that succeed has steadily improved. The college meets most of the requirements of the Race Relations (amendment) Act, but does not yet have an overarching action plan for race equality. There has been insufficient training for staff. The requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) are met, although parts of the college remain inaccessible to students with restricted mobility.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. Procedures for the initial assessment of students' additional support needs are clear and effective. The induction process is well structured and effective. Full-time and substantial part-time students have a named personal tutor. There is a good range of college-based enrichment activities. The group tutorial programme for full-time students is interesting and varied. Students value the high level of individual support they receive. Effective specialist support is provided by experienced staff. Key workers play an important role in helping students to cope with welfare and behavioural issues. Students have satisfactory access to advice, guidance and counselling services. The college makes good provision for childcare. Overall, the provision of additional support is satisfactory or better. However, the college does not sufficiently monitor its impact. The college has begun to address the requirements of the Child Protection Act. A policy is being developed and a senior member of staff appointed.

Students' views of the college



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

What students like about the college

- dedicated, friendly, supportive teachers

- an atmosphere of respect

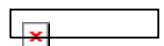
- meeting people from other cultures

- feeling more confident
- good access for wheelchair users
- the learning centres
- the crèche facilities.

What they feel could be improved

- cheaper food in the canteen
- a social area for students
- faster, more reliable computers
- smaller groups
- more interesting course materials
- more up-to-date library books.

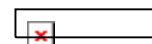
Other information



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must

should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole



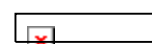
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	50	46	4
19+ and WBL*	62	34	4
Learning 16-18	47	47	6
19+ and WBL*	58	38	4

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

**work-based learning*

Achievement and standards



1. Over the three-year period starting 2002 and ending 2004, most retention and pass rates improved. In 2004, for example, pass rates for adult students at all levels, rose to above national averages when compared to other general FE and tertiary colleges in disadvantaged areas. In 2002 and 2003, retention and pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 were weak, but improved in 2004 to at or just below the national averages. Only level 3 long qualifications remain low. Student data for 2001, 2002 and 2003 were produced by the LSC, but the college's 2004 data have yet to be validated. In 2004, of the 16,831 students following courses, 51% were at entry and level 1 qualifications, 18% at level 2, 10% at level 3, 2% at higher level, and 19% were defined as other qualifications. Approximately 86% of students following individual qualifications were adults. The highest proportion of enrolments were in the curriculum areas of foundation; visual, performing arts and media; ICT; English, languages and communication, and business administration. Some 61% of students were female and nearly 50% were from minority ethnic groups. In 2004, success rates for most black minority ethnic groups improved to around the national averages. Females generally succeed better than males.

2. At level 1, the number of students following individual qualifications has steadily increased to over 4,000. Over a three-year period, retention rates at this level have generally remained slightly below the national averages. However, in 2004, the retention rates for students aged 19 and over rose by 12 percentage points, to 6% above the national rate. At level 2, there is a marked difference

between the retention rates for adults and students aged 16 to 18. Over a three-year period, the retention rates for adults have improved and remained at least 5 percentage points better than the national average. However, in contrast, although retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 also improved, the change was from poor to just below the national average. For the same age group, retention rates at level 3 have remained low. In 2004, for example, the retention rate at 67% was 8 percentage points below the national average. Retention rates of adult students following level 3 qualifications are broadly satisfactory and for short courses good.

3. Student attendance at lessons was slightly below the national averages at 74%. However, poor punctuality was noted as a key weakness in several curriculum areas. Students who arrive late are often disruptive and not always challenged sufficiently. Many full-time students do not realise the impact poor punctuality has on the learning process. In-year retention rates have improved over the last three years. A good proportion of students progress to higher levels of study. The highest proportion at 35% is the transfer from level 1 to level 2. Each year, approximately 200 level 3 students progress to higher education (HE) courses. Most students choose to attend local universities.

4. Over the past three years at level 1, pass rates have remained above the national averages for students of all ages. In 2004, the pass rates for adults were high, some 11 percentage points above the average. At level 2, until 2004, the pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 were low. However, adult students have remained consistently above the national averages rising to an overall pass rate of 83% in 2004. At level 3, although pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 were low in 2001 and 2002, over the last two years they rose to slightly above the national averages. In 2004, pass rates for adults at level 3, were six percentage points above the national average. Pass rates on short courses were poor, but significantly improved in 2004 to around the national averages.

5. The college has not yet developed a well-tested model for evaluating added value. For example, it does not know whether it adds value to individuals when their achievements are compared with prior attainment. A performance target setting model for full-time students aged 16 to 18 was introduced approximately six months before the inspection. Although inspectors were not able to make a judgement about its effectiveness, many commented favourably on the process and its value in motivating students. The college believes that it adds value through enrichment activities, good student progression and extensive student support.

6. In 2004, key skills achievements were very poor. Of the 1,133 enrolments on courses at levels 1, 2 and 3, only 3% were successful. A very low proportion of students submitted portfolios. Of those that sat an examination, the best result was the level 1 application of number qualification at 73%, but at level 2 the result was poor. The college recognised the weaknesses in key skills provision and in 2005 changed their approach. It is not possible to judge the effectiveness of these new arrangements.

7. Many students develop good practical skills. Coursework is generally well presented and some students' work is at a very high standard. Students with low self-esteem develop good personal skills and gain in confidence. Many students develop an enjoyment of learning. Few students on ESOL courses take accredited qualifications. Target setting is not always sufficiently robust to measure achievement. For some students, insufficient attention is paid to their previous learning and experiences.

16 to 18 year olds

8. In 2004, about 13% of the students were aged 16 to 18. About 70% of these followed full-time courses. Some 45% of enrolments were at entry level and level 1, 29% at level 2 and 18% were at level 3. The college does not offer AS-level and GCE A-level qualifications as part of the full-time provision and the focus is on vocational courses. At level 1, the proportion of students who start a qualification and achieve a successful outcome (success rate) is satisfactory, but low on GNVQ qualifications. At level 2, national vocational qualification (NVQ) success rates are generally good, but low on GCSEs. On GNVQ and Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national level 3 programmes, the success rates are above national averages, but on AS-level and GCE A-level subjects with very low numbers they are poor. Retention rates have remained below national

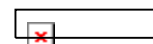
averages at all levels for the last three years.

9. The college offers work-based learning modern apprenticeship programmes in motor vehicle maintenance, electrical installation, hairdressing and early years. Over the 3 year period ending in 2004, 95 learners followed programmes with approximately two thirds at foundation level. The majority of advanced learners followed the electrical installation programme. As most of the advanced learners are still in learning, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the programme. On the two other programmes, excluding motor vehicle which is poor, the proportion of learners that leave and pass an NVQ is satisfactory, at around 40%. However, the proportion of learners that achieve a modern apprenticeship is very low. Only 1 learner has achieved a full framework in 3years.

Adult learners

10. In 2004, most students were adults, with the majority following part-time courses. Some 52% of enrolments were at entry level and level 1, 16% at level 2 and 8% were at level 3. The remaining 24% of enrolments were at level 4 or were unassigned. In 2004, the proportion of students who started a level 1 qualification and achieved a successful outcome (success rate) was good, but low on NVQ qualifications. At level 2, NVQ success rates are generally good or very good, and include a good range of GCSEs, GNVQs and NVQs. At level 3, AS-level and GCE A-level success rates are just satisfactory, but most other qualifications are well above the national averages. Success rates on short courses are now at or above the national average. In 2004, retention rates at all levels rose to well above the national averages.

Quality of education and training



11. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors graded teaching, learning and attainment in 190 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 57%, satisfactory in 39% and less than satisfactory in 4% of lessons. The good or better teaching was lower than the national average, at 65%, for all colleges inspected between September 2001 and June 2002. Some 54% of the learning grades were good or better; also below the national average. The percentage of lessons that were very good or excellent, at 18%, was 7% below the national average for similar colleges. The teaching and learning of adult students are generally better than for students aged 16 to 18, some 12% higher for teaching. The best teaching was at level 3, where 65% of lessons were good or better. The weakest teaching was at entry level which was 12% below the national average. Overall, the proportion of less than satisfactory teaching was slightly better than the national average. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in business and health and social care. The highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was on ESOL courses. Generally, the teaching in lessons where theory and practical activities were combined was significantly better than either activity on their own. The teaching standards of full-time, part-time and agency teachers were generally the same.

12. The best teaching is in the areas of modern foreign languages, EFL, ICT and business. However, all curriculum areas have varying proportions of good or better teaching. In the better lessons, the planning and structure of lessons are good. Teachers are well prepared. They make good use of paper-based learning resource materials. Much teaching of adults is good. In many lessons, teachers are effective in developing students' confidence, and nurturing core values and respect for each other. They regularly check on learning and progress. Careful attention paid to individual needs. The very good lessons are typified by teaching that is vigorous, adventurous and well paced. Teachers are able to select appropriate strategies such as the use of pair and group work to embellish learning. Teachers are effective at motivating students. Most students are enthusiastic about learning and want to progress. In more advanced lessons, the better teachers are skilled at introducing specialist terms. They ensure that complex language is accessible to everyone. Many students with identified learning support needs receive good additional classroom support.

13. Too few lessons are good or better and none is outstanding. The weaker lessons are often characterised by the setting of work that is insufficiently demanding. In these lessons, students are not purposely engaged. In ESOL, there is too much whole-class teaching and not enough emphasis on speaking and listening. In some other lessons, the teaching does not sufficiently take account of individual needs, abilities or prior knowledge. Many teachers have insufficient access to, or ineffectively use, ILT. In performing arts, music and media, there are examples of poor classroom management. The teaching, whilst broadly satisfactory, often lacks inspiration. Teachers use too narrow a range of teaching methods. There is often an over-reliance on question and answer techniques. Teachers sometimes use language and set tasks that are unnecessarily complex. In many lessons, learning is undermined by poor punctuality. In construction, there are unsafe practices in the workshop. The teaching of key skills is still weak, but improving.

14. Most staff are appropriately qualified to teach and have a good understanding of their subject area. However, the number of qualified teachers available to meet the needs of students following ESOL and literacy and numeracy courses is insufficient. Teachers' recent experience of workplace practice varies between areas. For example, in visual and performing arts and media it is good, but in business administration and ILT it is poor. Staff training and development activities in most other areas are satisfactory. Whilst there is an active teacher training programme, the college does not have an overview of the percentage of staff still to be trained.

15. Accommodation at the college's main sites and community venues is generally satisfactory, but of variable quality. The Wandsworth Centre is old and redevelopment work is currently taking place. The classrooms are mostly satisfactory, but students with mobility difficulties cannot reach the electrical installation area. Putney offers mostly good accommodation. For example, it has an industrial-standard kitchen used by Skills for Working Life students and a well-refurbished biology laboratory for the college's CoVE work in 'Career Pathways in the National Health Service'. Excessive noise is a problem in a small number of classrooms with flexible partition walls. The student refectory, lounge and enrichment areas are very pleasant and welcoming. The standard of accommodation at Roehampton is generally satisfactory or better, but there is no lift. Students with mobility difficulties are unable to attend arts and crafts courses situated on the first floor. Both Tooting and the recently opened centre at Battersea are bright, modern and very attractive. Courses are held six days a week at Tooting. All four main centres have prayer rooms and washing facilities. Sizeable crèches at Wandsworth and Putney can accommodate 60 babies and a number of pre-school aged children. The standard of equipment is satisfactory or better at all centres, however, the testing of portable equipment in most parts of the college is significantly overdue. Comprehensive learning resource centres are provided at Wandsworth, Putney and Tooting. An extensive range of resources are frequently used by students. However, teachers' make insufficient use of ILT and the college is still in the early stages of developing a virtual learning environment.

16. Overall, assessment procedures are satisfactory and are mostly effective in helping students to progress. Teachers use a variety of assessment methods to take account of the different ways students learn. These include peer review and self-assessment. However, standards are not consistent across the college. For example, whilst diagnostic assessment is used well in modern foreign languages, in ESOL the results from initial assessment do not sufficiently inform teaching. In literacy and numeracy, targets are set but are not reviewed regularly. Progress is not always recorded. In construction, the outcomes of assessment are not used to help students to develop their skills and knowledge further. Assignments are mostly appropriate and some are particularly well designed. For example, the six-week assignment completed by visual arts students during induction, that maps skills and aspiration to choosing the right course.

17. Arrangements for reviewing students' progress are generally good. Most students receive regular feedback: informally, annotated on marked work, and during timetabled individual tutorials. Marked work is returned promptly. Most students understand how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve. Parents and carers of students aged 16 to 18 are kept well informed about their progress through letters and parents' evenings. A new system for measuring full-time students' progress is valued by learners and teachers. Teachers use information about students' previous performance, including attendance and punctuality, to agree personal targets for achievement at the start and during the course. Students across the ability range are motivated by this approach.

18. The college has introduced a wide range of strategies to improve poor student punctuality and attendance. The college's expectation that students will attend regularly and on time is reinforced through a learning contract. This is displayed on all classroom walls. Most teachers challenge students when they arrive late. They follow college procedures and record and follow-up non-attendance. Key workers who provide additional academic and pastoral support reinforce this policy. Teachers and managers monitor attendance and punctuality carefully through the use of an electronic recording system. Although punctuality and attendance remain a cause for concern, in some curriculum areas there are signs of improvement.

19. A wide range of full-time, part-time and short courses, covering 13 areas of learning are provided by the college. Courses are offered at four main centres and through a large number of community venues. Work-based learning is provided in hairdressing, child care, electrical and motor vehicle. The college is also a large provider of Learndirect courses. A specialist course design facility is offered to employers in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. The college has worked successfully with the trade union movement to encourage large numbers of adult students to follow a range of courses offered in the workplace. Widening participation is a strategic priority for the college. The course portfolio provides good opportunities for progression. Most areas range from pre-entry level to level 3 and some level 4. Some students have progressed from foundation level through to HE. Flexible timetabling and multiple start dates ensure that students can attend courses at times convenient for them. The ESOL, literacy, numeracy and IT provision, is extensive. However, too few ESOL courses are designed to meet the interests and specific needs of individual students. Students aged 16 to 18 are required to follow key skills in communication, application of number and IT at an appropriate level.

20. The college has been awarded interim CoVE status in music technology and in 'Career Pathways in the National Health Service', in collaboration with other colleges. The college works closely with a range of community-based organisations. Together they plan training and are responsive to identified needs. Some 300 school pupils aged 14 to 16 attend college on a weekly basis. The college's enrichment programme is varied and well organised. Student participation is good. Activities include: sport; gym; disc jockey skills; chess and table tennis. In most areas, a high number of students take part in work experience. This can range from one day each week to a two-week block. Educational visits, including visits abroad, and visiting speakers are offered as opportunities in many curriculum areas.

21. Support to meet the individual needs of students is good. Arrangements for initial guidance and assessment are mostly good, although there are some gaps in pre-enrolment guidance for modern foreign languages. The advice and guidance team works closely with the Connexions service to help students aged 16 to 18 make appropriate course choices. Careers advisers offer further guidance either individually or through tutorials. Initial assessment procedures are effective. Experienced specialist staff are available to assess any specific learning needs, including sensory impairment, dyslexia, mental health and behavioural problems. The initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and language is good and is often followed-up with a further diagnostic assessment. The college plans its additional support provision well. It is effective in anticipating demand and prioritising the use of scarce specialist resources such as dyslexia support and speech therapy. Additional support is put in place promptly for most students who need it, including those in community venues. Extra help is provided by additional support workers in the classroom, or the offer of discrete literacy, numeracy and language courses. The college can provide, where appropriate, specialist technology to assist students. Key workers are effective in helping students to overcome barriers to learning. Support staff liaise well with tutors and respond quickly to needs.

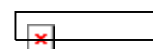
22. The college has a well-structured induction programme. The guidelines are clear for both full-time and part-time students. Students who join courses late receive an induction pack. The student diary is comprehensive and contains information on how to access a range of support services. The college provides good advice and support for students with housing and other welfare concerns. Non-attendance is quickly followed-up and students with behavioural problems receive support. Technician support in some areas is exceptionally good. For example, in visual arts, where they help students use the specialist computer software.

23. Students attending the Wandsworth and Putney sites have good access to advice and guidance

and counselling services. Some drop-in sessions are offered on other sites, but students have to travel to use some services. Access to advice and guidance is supplemented where appropriate by e-mail contact. Students value the support they receive from their teachers and through specialist services offered by the college. Young parents attending the college are also supported through special parenting classes.

24. A well-established group tutorial programme for full-time and substantial part-time students includes sessions on health and social education, work preparation, careers guidance and preparation for HE. The college has begun to implement the requirements of the Child Protection Act. Governors have appointed a senior member of staff to take responsibility for this area, and approved a new policy on implementing the Act. Training for learning support staff has taken place and further training is planned for all staff.

Leadership and management



25. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal provides good leadership. The senior management team has been successful in managing change. They have fostered an expectation of high standards amongst staff and students and established a clear focus on improving the students' experience and their achievements. The college has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses in management identified in the last inspection in 2001. Student achievements have improved, particularly over the past two years. In 2004, pass and retention rates for adult students exceeded national figures, although the retention rates at levels 3 for students aged 16 to 18 remain well below. Enrolments have increased by 14% since 2001, including significant growth for students aged 16 to 18. The college has achieved financial stability through restructuring the curriculum and staffing and a range of efficiency measures. The course offer has been realigned to meet the needs of younger students who are not suited to academic courses, disadvantaged groups and vulnerable adults.

26. Governors and senior managers set a clear direction for the college. Governors and staff make appropriate contributions to the strategic plan. Progress against the plan is carefully monitored four times a year by senior managers and the corporation against a useful set of broad college performance indicators. A succinct summary of the plan is distributed to all staff who are well aware of the strategic priorities. The three-year development plan outlines how the priorities will be achieved. However, the operational plans do not always contain sufficiently precise targets and performance indicators, to guide actions and provide a tool for monitoring progress. Plans do not always closely relate to each other or contain sufficient detail. For example, proposals that relate to race equality are contained in too many separate plans that give little detail of how improvements will be made.

27. Curriculum management is mostly satisfactory, but some areas are good and others are poor. The management of aspects of work-based learning in construction are unsatisfactory. The difficulties that arose last year in the management of key skills have now been addressed, although it is too soon to see improvements. Senior managers have been proactive in establishing productive relationships with community groups, the voluntary sector and local employers such as St George's Hospital and Wandsworth Council. These links benefit students. However, there is insufficient employer involvement in some curriculum areas to ensure current vocational relevance. Communications across the college are good. Despite staffing and provision changes, staff morale is high. Effective use is made of the formal meeting structure, college conference days, newsletters and briefings. The principal meets staff and students at each site each term. Following a recent survey which showed that staff were less positive about communications than in the previous year, managers are working to improve communications further.

28. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Procedures are well established and comprehensive. College teams review their activities three times a year and prepare a quality improvement plan to show how

they will address the weaknesses identified. To assist in carrying out the reviews, course teams receive accurate and timely data, the results of surveys of students' views and lesson observation profiles. Student data are analysed by ethnicity, gender and disability. Efficiency measures such as the proportion of visiting teachers employed and average class sizes are considered. However, quality assurance systems are not consistently applied by all teams. In ICT for example, reviews are self-critical and accurate, but the checking and follow-up of proposed actions is sometimes weak. This is in contrast to modern foreign languages where it is strong. In other areas, improvements have resulted from actions following self-assessment, but not in ESOL. The college self-assessment report accurately identified most strengths and weaknesses. However, several of the curriculum grades awarded by inspectors were lower than those judged by the college. The college's overall lesson observation profile was significantly better than that found during inspection.

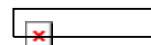
29. Opportunities for professional development are good. Individual training plans are referenced to the strategic plan, current priorities identified by managers, self-assessment, staff appraisal and the lesson observation system. Improving teaching and learning is one of the college's key priorities. Recent training has focused on meeting the needs of individual students, techniques for checking on learning and how to extend teaching methods and techniques. Since the last inspection, there has been some improvement. The college has reduced the level of unsatisfactory teaching, but the proportion of good or better teaching remains below the national average. A good mentoring and targeted training scheme has been introduced and peer observation is helping to share good practice.

30. The strategic plan, policies and procedures reflect the college's strong commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity. Staff and governors receive regular training and briefings to support the implementation of the policies. However, there has been insufficient specific training to ensure staff are aware of the Race Relations (amendment) Act. The college equality and diversity policies are up to date and it has recently introduced a separate race equality policy. The college meets most of the requirements of the Act, but does not yet have an overarching action plan. Data on staff and students are analysed by ethnicity, disability and gender and the information used to inform actions. Over the period of activity, the success rates for African-Caribbean students for example, have improved more than the college average. The proportion of staff from minority ethnic groups is higher than found in the local community, although it does not yet reflect the student profile. Generally, male students continue to achieve less well than females. Equality is promoted well in the classroom in many curriculum areas. A recent student survey showed that 87% of students considered that staff and students treated each other with respect and 93% felt that they were treated fairly. The college meets the requirements of the SENDA, although 5% of the college remains inaccessible to those with restricted mobility.

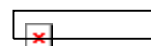
31. Governance is good. Governors work well with the principal and senior managers. Members make good use of their professional skills. Governors are well informed about the work of the college and know its strengths and weaknesses. There are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of committees. Members scrutinise detailed reports on finance and college performance to enable them to carry out their business effectively. For example, when the quality and performance committee considers the draft self-assessment report, it scrutinises the pass and retention rates for each course over a three year period. The corporation's evaluative self-assessment forms part of the college's report. The proportion of governors with a minority ethnic background is higher than that in the local community.

32. The financial management of the college is good. A small surplus has replaced a previous deficit. Savings have been achieved through staff and course restructuring, changes in purchasing procedures and a range of efficiency measures. For example, the current average class size is now higher than the national average. However, overall costs remain high in comparison with similar colleges. The value for money steering group provides a useful forum for staff to discuss and agree further measures to improve efficiency. The college has broadly met its funding targets in the past two years. Given the improvements in the success rates and the increased efficiency, the college provides satisfactory value for money. The college has improved the accommodation through good management of resources. For example, the Tooting site provides a very good environment for staff and students. The accommodation strategy if achieved will provide a high-quality and efficient environment for learning and working.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Construction



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

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates for electrical installation short courses
- high standards of work in plumbing
- good resources.

Weaknesses

- unsafe work practices in carpentry
- insufficiently demanding teaching in many lessons
- weak management of work-based learning.

Scope of provision

33. The college offers courses at levels 1 and 2 in electrical installation, plumbing and carpentry. The entry-level construction course Skills for Working Life, includes painting and decorating, carpentry and brickwork. Courses in plumbing and carpentry were successfully introduced in 2003. Some 151 students study full-time, part-time or short courses and 25 advanced apprentices are following work-based programmes. The area provides both school links and IF programmes for local school pupils.

Achievement and standards

34. Retention and pass rates in electrical installation short courses are high. For City and Guilds 2380 16th edition and City and Guilds 2391, the retention rates are 100% and 98%, respectively, and pass rates are well above national averages. Retention and pass rates on electrical installation long courses are satisfactory and some courses are above national averages. At the time of the inspection, no students had completed the work-based apprenticeship programme which started in 2002. Students are progressing towards completion and some have achieved technical certificates and key skills. Relatively few students have left the course. Of the 15 students who started in 2002 and 2003, 12 are still on the programme.

35. Students' work on levels 1 and 2 plumbing in copper pipe work is of a high standard. They have well-developed skills and a good understanding of cutting and shaping. Students produce high-quality work. Practical and theoretical work in electrical installation is satisfactory. Some students demonstrate poor standards of work in carpentry. Assignments in construction are generally satisfactory with some of a good standard, but work-based portfolios include too limited a range of evidence.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Entry level construction	entry	No. of starts	*	23	45
		% retention	*	74	62
		% pass rate	*	59	94
City and Guilds 6022 copper tube advice and installation 1 year	1	No. of starts	*	*	48
		% retention	*	*	81
		% pass rate	*	*	91
City and Guilds 2360-05 electrical installation part 1 (theory) 1 year	2	No. of starts	48	55	50
		% retention	71	87	80
		% pass rate	68	71	83
City and Guilds 2360-02 electrical installation part 2 competences	3	No. of starts	50	51	23
		% retention	68	80	96
		% pass rate	47	12	41
City and Guilds 2380/1 16 th edition short	3	No. of starts	149	115	114
		% retention	99	100	100
		% pass rate	89	81	81

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* course not offered in that year

Quality of education and training

36. Teaching is generally satisfactory, with a minority being good or better, and some unsatisfactory. In the better lessons, students develop the ability to assess the standard of their work in relation to the speed and requirements of the workplace. For example, in one good practical lesson, students had the confidence to critique their own work against examples of good workmanship. In many lessons, teaching is insufficiently demanding to enable students to progress according to their ability. The weaker practical lessons are typified by sets of tasks that lack overall cohesion and students who develop vocational skills very slowly. Theory lessons contain too few strategies to accommodate students' different learning styles. Insufficient attention is paid to health and safety in some carpentry lessons. Students attending these lessons have a poor understanding of safe

practices. For example, how to store sharp tools safely and keep floors clean and uncluttered.

37. Teachers and assessors are well qualified. Many reflect their up-to-date industrial knowledge in their teaching and assessment practice. Classroom facilities are satisfactory, although the smaller rooms are cramped for large groups of students. Workshops are spacious with a good range of tools and equipment, most to industry standard. For example, plumbing contains a new motorised pipe-threading machine. Data projectors and screens are available for teaching, but the virtual learning environment for construction is still under development. Many courses have comprehensive teaching notes. In the workplace, supportive employers provide tools and equipment including full personal protective equipment. Modern apprentices are supervised by qualified and experienced electricians.

38. College-based assessment is satisfactory. Written assignments are marked appropriately. Useful guidance is provided for students on how to improve their work. Internal verification is well structured, but there is weak assessment practice in work-based learning. Portfolios are unco-ordinated and contain insufficient supporting evidence. Many witness statements are unsigned and undated and only one site diary included an approved work-based recorder list. Written feedback is inadequate to assist students to improve. Many of these weaknesses were identified in October 2004. Recent actions have resulted in improvements.

39. The range of courses is satisfactory. The successful and expanding electrical installation courses from levels 1 to 3 are well established. There is a limited range of plumbing and carpentry programmes available, and they are focused on craft skills. Skills for Working Life in construction at entry level has improved opportunities for a wider range of students to enter the construction industry. Many students take advantage of sport sessions organised through the college enrichment programme. Students also visit trade fairs, appropriately, as part of their courses.

40. Individual learning plans are used ineffectively in work-based learning. Many do not include unit completion dates. Most qualification end dates are the same as the expected end date for the apprenticeship programme. Progress reviews are weak and do not formally review and measure learner progress against planned targets.

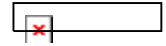
41. Support for college-based students is satisfactory. Initial assessment is satisfactory and additional learning needs are well supported. Progress reviews take place regularly, but do not always include specific short-term targets. Students receive good vocational and pastoral support and guidance.

Leadership and management

42. The leadership and management of college-based courses, the majority of the provision, are satisfactory. Course team meetings are held regularly and actions from previous meetings are followed up. Students' progress, curriculum developments and progress against the action plan are discussed. Staff are fully involved with the self-assessment process. Staff are kept well informed about college-wide issues by the head of learning programme. Insufficient action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching and ensure safe working practices throughout the area. On college courses, equality of opportunity is satisfactory. It is discussed during induction and in individual tutorials.

43. The leadership and management of work-based learning are weak. Data is not collected or used effectively to manage student progress or to inform the training programme. Quality assurance of work-based programmes is unsatisfactory. Individual learning plans are poorly completed. Portfolios are unco-ordinated and contain insufficient supporting evidence. Internal verification does not include the development of personal and vocational skills required by the apprenticeship programme. There are no formal arrangements for the monitoring of equality of opportunity practices in the workplace. Work-based learners have only a rudimentary understanding of equality of opportunity issues. Progress reviews are not adequately used to further raise their awareness.

Business administration and management



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on GNVQ intermediate business and certificate in administration level 1
- much good teaching
- good flexible provision to meet the needs of learners.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on book-keeping courses
- insufficient strategies to ensure vocational relevance
- unsatisfactory monitoring of students' progress on business courses.

Scope of provision

44. The college provides a range of courses at the Wandsworth, Putney and Tooting centres including legal studies, business, book-keeping and accounts and access to business. Courses are offered at entry, levels 1 and 2 and the legal secretaries diploma, the AVCE (double award) in business and access to business at level 3. Part-time students can also attend courses in some subject areas. There are well-defined and flexible progression routes. At the time of the inspection, there were 614 students following college courses.

Achievement and standards

45. Retention rates on most courses are generally satisfactory. In 2004, however, the retention rates on the GNVQ foundation in business and legal secretaries certificate courses were 18 and 8 percentage points, respectively, below the national average. Pass rates in GNVQ intermediate business and certificate in administration level 1 are high. On the certificate of administration level 1 course, the pass rate in 2004 was 15 percentage points above the national average. Pass rates in the legal secretaries' certificate level 2 are consistently high and improving. Pass rates are low on book-keeping at levels 1 and 2. At level 1, in 2004, they were 10 points below the national average,

and on book-keeping at level 2, they were also low. Pass rates on Skills for Work entry-level certificate declined sharply from 94% in 2003 to 43% in 2004.

46. Students make satisfactory progress in developing practical and analytical skills that they can apply in everyday contexts. Many students on entry or level 1 courses start with little or no related practical skills. The standard of students' work is generally satisfactory. Students following the legal secretaries' certificate at level 2 produce good work at a professional standard. Students are generally well motivated and enthusiastic.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration and management, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in administration	1	No. of starts	*	39	39
		% retention	*	77	72
		% pass rate	*	140	124
Book-keeping and accounts	1	No. of starts	155	140	124
		% retention	97	94	98
		% pass rate	77	62	65
Book-keeping and accounts	2	No. of starts	35	70	52
		% retention	100	99	94
		% pass rate	54	38	45
GNVQ intermediate in business	2	No. of starts	*	40	39
		% retention	*	75	69
		% pass rate	*	80	85
Legal secretary certificate	2	No. of starts	48	60	57
		% retention	65	65	65
		% pass rate	95	95	97
AVCE (double award) in business	3	No. of starts	66	16	49
		% retention	27	88	55
		% pass rate	56	79	78

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* course not offered in that year

Quality of education and training

47. Much of the teaching is good. In the better lessons, teaching is lively, well paced and suitably demanding to meet the individual needs of students. In one lesson, all students responded enthusiastically when analysing a case study on a high street clothes retailer. In another lesson, the teacher creatively used a variety of practical and theoretical exercises to accommodate the range of past experiences of students. The students' subject knowledge, presentation skills and self-confidence visibly improved. Team-building and group work during lessons is well developed. One student with impaired hearing, who is assisted effectively by a signer, took the lead on various occasions. Students' learning is checked regularly through questioning in lessons. However, learning is sometimes restricted as students with identified ESOL needs do not always accept the support offered. Students receive insufficient written feedback and undertake too little practice of written skills. A minority of lessons fail to meet the needs of all students. The teaching of key skills is

satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught in separate workshops and some are relevant to the area of learning. There are insufficient strategies to ensure up-to-date vocational relevance.

48. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Opportunities for staff development are good, but many teachers lack recent relevant experience in business or commerce. The learning environment is generally satisfactory, but most rooms lack displays and information pertinent to the subject. Learning resources are satisfactory. Students have access to the Internet and good learning resource centres to support them in independent research or assignment work. Teachers use ILT very infrequently.

49. Assessment practice on professional courses is good, but the monitoring of students' progress on business courses is not effective. On business courses, student feedback and assessment forms are sometimes incomplete and written feedback is insufficiently detailed. Target setting is generally satisfactory, but in some subjects it lacks focus and specific rigour. Most students on professional courses make good progress, but many on business programmes do not know what needs to be completed. Initial assessment is satisfactory.

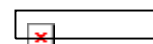
50. Courses that are provided from entry level to level 3 meet the needs of the local community. The provision is reviewed regularly to ensure its continued relevance. Programmes are timetabled flexibly. Students with ESOL and other learning needs are offered workshops to help them to develop their skills. Teachers guide students carefully after they start a programme. Students are encouraged to review their choices and change to an alternative programme at another level if appropriate. The opportunities for students to explore realistic working environments or gain first-hand knowledge of the workplace are limited. A few students following administration courses at levels 1 and 2 complete work experience in relevant office situations. For example, a placement in one of the college's administration departments.

51. Information regarding courses and programmes is satisfactory. Students undertake an initial assessment and receive a satisfactory induction to the department and individual courses. The links with a local recruitment company are good. Some students use this link to gain employment at the end of their course or temporary holiday work. Careers advice is available on site.

Leadership and management

52. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The development of the curriculum is satisfactory and responsive to local needs. Attendance and punctuality are monitored closely. Quality assurance procedures are generally satisfactory. Teachers are observed at least annually and receive detailed feedback. Support is provided if a development need is identified. Team meetings are held monthly and are occasionally attended by support staff. However, there is insufficient standardisation of procedures and sharing of good practice between subject areas. The department lacks strategies for developing business, community and school links. There is good promotion and practice of equal opportunities. Students from diverse backgrounds work well together.

Information and communications technology



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

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on the diploma for IT practitioners and AVCE ICT courses

- effective adult teaching
- good progression rates
- wide range of courses
- good support for full-time students.

Weaknesses

- poor retention and pass rates in GNVQ foundation
- poor attendance and punctuality on full-time courses.

Scope of provision

53. The college offers a range of ICT courses from level 1 to level 4. Courses are offered at the college's three main sites and at community centres. At the time of inspection, there were 188 students aged 16 to 18, following GNVQ foundation and intermediate, AVCE, diploma and advanced diploma for IT practitioners and IT key skill courses. The part-time offer includes a range of externally accredited courses such as the new computer literacy and information technology (new CLAIT), modular access programme (computing), City and Guilds certificate programmes and other vocationally oriented IT programmes. During the inspection, 947 adults were following these programmes. The college also works in partnership with a national provider, to offer IT qualifications up to level 2, at Balham. Trade Union Council (TUC) IT short courses for teachers are offered at Norwood and Ealing, accredited through the Open College Network (OCN).

Achievement and standards

54. Most pass rates are high and above the national averages. In 2004, the GNVQ intermediate in ICT pass rate improved to 93%, 22 percentage points above the national average. On the diploma for IT practitioners, the pass rate in 2003/04 was 70%, again well above national average. In 2004, pass and retention rates on IT key skills courses were excellent, but most students have to yet complete their portfolios. Retention and pass rates on the AVCE IT course were significantly higher over a two-year period than the national average. A good proportion of students achieve high grades on GNVQ intermediate and AVCE IT courses. In 2004, retention rates on most part-time courses were well above national averages. However, retention rates on GNVQ courses have generally declined and in 2004 were below the national averages. For example, on the GNVQ foundation ICT course, the retention rate was 61%, significantly below the national average, at 78%.

55. The standard of work produced by AVCE and GNVQ intermediate students is good. For example, in one lesson, AVCE ICT students made skilful use of project management software. They

produced a high standard of documentation and used appropriate technical language. Full-time students' coursework is well organised. Many students progress from lower to higher level courses. Student punctuality and attendance on most full-time courses are poor.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ foundation IT	1	No. of starts	36	38	18
		% retention	97	68	61
		% pass rate	57	85	73
City and Guilds certificate for IT users	1	No. of starts	*	340	1,125
		% retention	*	45	48
		% pass rate	*	62	61
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	67	46	52
		% retention	75	74	58
		% pass rate	43	82	93
City and Guilds diploma for IT practitioners	2	No. of starts	*	50	35
		% retention	*	84	86
		% pass rate	*	50	70
AVCE IT	3	No. of starts	33	36	53
		% retention	88	92	89
		% pass rate	38	76	79
Modular access IT programme: access to HE	3	No. of starts	35	52	38
		% retention	71	60	58
		% pass rate	92	45	64

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

56. Teaching is mostly good, particularly for part-time adult students. Teachers provide high-quality workbooks and additional handouts. Students progress confidently and at their own pace. Teachers check progress regularly and give high levels of individual attention. Small group work and class teaching is effective. Students develop good communication skills and learn from each other. Teachers are successful in developing students' oral and writing skills and reinforce the correct use of terminology. The teaching on the diploma for IT practitioners' course is very good. In one lesson, students engaged in a very effective discussion. The teacher posed a range of IT problems and asked the class to find solutions. Students contributed enthusiastically. For example, one student was able to explain clearly how a faulty USB port could be repaired. However, in another lesson for full-time students, the teacher wasted too much time discussing individual students' lack of homework. In other lessons, students are insufficiently encouraged to develop their own ideas and find solutions to IT problems. The use of the college intranet and the virtual learning environment is underdeveloped. In some lessons, student absence and poor punctuality cause disruption.

57. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Some teachers are trained to teach the CISCO certificate or the alpha plus technical qualification. Computer rooms are appropriately

equipped. Many rooms have data projectors and some have interactive whiteboards. Most computer equipment and software is at an appropriate standard. However, full-time students sometimes have difficulties using specialist software that only runs on certain computers. Technical support is good and problems are dealt with promptly. The resources in the learning resource centres and open access IT rooms are satisfactory. There are multiple copies of most course books, but few other publications available to promote wider reading. The Balham Centre does not have a data projector for software demonstrations.

58. Assessment and monitoring of student progress are satisfactory. Full-time student assignments are appropriate and their work is properly cross-referenced to the assessment criteria. Verbal feedback is good, but some written feedback is insufficiently detailed to ensure that students know how to improve. Internal verification of assessment is well organised and meets examination board requirements. Full-time students have three reviews a year. Progress towards the achievement of an overall target grade is openly discussed and new short-term targets agreed. However, students on the GNVQ foundation course have a limited understanding of this process. On adult courses, examination board assignments are effectively used to prepare students for final assessments. Adult students at the Balham Centre have regular progress reviews.

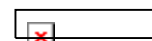
59. The college offers a good range of course that meet students' needs. The progression routes are good, offering progression opportunities from entry level to a foundation degree. In general, progression rates to higher-level courses are good. For example, 73% of full-time students who were successful at the intermediate level progressed to the AVCE course. Over a third of part-time adult students moved on to level 2 courses after completing at level 1. IT learning centres are conveniently located. Adult students are able to attend different centres at different times of the week to meet individual circumstances. Students following the AVCE ICT course are encouraged to follow the CISCO networking course as an additional qualification. Similarly, students following the diploma for IT practitioners can additionally follow an alpha plus technical qualification. These opportunities are valued highly by students. Key skills assessments are now integral to intermediate GNVQ and AVCE assignments. Courses below foundation degree level have no specific links with employers.

60. Support for full-time students is good. Teachers are effective both in the lessons and in one-to-one tutorials. Key workers and classroom assistants are effectively used to provide additional support in the classroom. The ethnic mix of teachers and support staff is reflective of the student population. Students value talks from external speakers. Although the guidance procedures for part-time adult students are good, some receive inadequate advice.

Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff morale, team spirit and communication are good. Course management files are comprehensive and planning is thorough. Opportunities for, and participation in, staff development activities are good. Teachers value the appraisal process. Teachers are regularly observed teaching, but the college's internal grading system is too generous. Initiatives to improve student punctuality and attendance are not having sufficient impact. Sometimes day-to-day operational changes cause unnecessary disruption to students. Self-assessment is thorough and appropriately self-critical. Development plans are detailed and comprehensive. However, the monitoring of progress against the plans lacks consistency. Equal opportunities are actively promoted through good personal relationships and teachers high expectations of their students.

Health, social and child care



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

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses
- effective integration of theory and practical skills
- good career pathways and progression to HE
- good support to improve student performance.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates on several courses in 2004
- poor student attendance and punctuality
- insufficiently demanding work in some lessons
- weak quality assurance on a few courses.

Scope of provision

62. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in health, social care and early years care. Courses range from entry level to level 3 and include: GNVQ health and social care at foundation, intermediate and AVCE levels. Early years courses span entry level through to a national diploma. Other early years courses include the progression award in early years and the NVQ early years care and education at levels 2 and 3. Access to health sciences, a certificate in counselling and NVQ provision in cleaning and support services are also provided. At the time of the inspection, 568 students were following courses in the area of learning.

Achievement and standards

63. There are good retention and pass rates on many courses. In 2004, the retention rate on the GNVQ intermediate course in health and social care, at 91%, was high. The retention rate on the NVQ level 2 in early years was 9 percentage points above the national average and the pass rate was high. Retention and pass rates on the access to health sciences course were also high. Retention and pass rates are low on a few courses. In 2004, the NVQ level 1 cleaning and support services course had a retention rate of 70% and a pass rate of 39% which are well below the national averages. Both retention and pass rates were significantly below national averages on the certificate in counselling studies course. In 2004, the pass rate on the national diploma in early years

was low. Rates of internal progression are good. Progression into vocational and HE courses from the AVCE health and social care and also from the access to health sciences courses are high. Some 79% of access students go on to HE.

64. Students' personal and practical skills are developed effectively. Written work is of a good standard and NVQ early years portfolios are well organised. Poor student attendance and punctuality have a disruptive effect on several courses. Attendance rates during inspection were 10 percentage points below the national average. Lateness disrupted a third of the lessons observed. Many students in early years and health and social care achieve relevant additional qualifications in first aid and food hygiene.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social and child care, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	*	19	22
		% retention	*	84	82
		% pass rate	*	75	78
NVQ cleaning and support services (short)	1	No. of starts	*	181	137
		% retention	*	90	70
		% pass rate	*	78	39
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	32	41	43
		% retention	81	73	91
		% pass rate	92	67	82
NVQ early years care and education (1 year)	2	No. of starts	19	43	49
		% retention	79	79	84
		% pass rate	67	91	95
AVCE health and social care (1 year)	3	No. of starts	18	40	61
		% retention	72	85	79
		% pass rate	100	91	83
Modular access programme in health sciences	3	No. of starts	30	33	60
		% retention	87	91	85
		% pass rate	81	97	80

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

65. Most teaching is good or better. In the best lessons, teaching meets the needs of individual students. Many lessons are well prepared and theory and practical skills are integrated effectively. Well-designed case studies help students to consolidate their work and apply their learning in a realistic context. Good links are made between theory and students' practical experience of working with young children or clients in care. Students readily talk about their own experience. Teachers make good use of these opportunities to help students further develop their understanding and skills. In one lesson, students clearly understood how a farm visit could provide learning opportunities for children. In another lesson, following researched information, there was lively and topical debate on whether smokers were second-class citizens. Less successful lessons are insufficiently demanding and students do not progress according to their ability. In too many lessons, all students use the

same task sheets. In such lessons, many students are not well motivated or attentive and make unimaginative responses. In some lessons, there are missed opportunities to make relevant links with key skills.

66. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. There are sufficient IT facilities and learning resources for student use. Teachers are appropriately qualified and vocationally experienced in early years, health and social care and counselling. Part-time staff attend professional development courses. CoVE funding has provided very useful one-week hospital placements for student and staff development. Classrooms have overhead projector and video play back facilities and two now have electronic whiteboards. The quality of some copied paper-based materials is poor. In one lesson, they were inappropriate for the students' cultural and social background.

67. The suitability and rigour of assessment is satisfactory. Assessment is used effectively to monitor the progress made by students. Assignment briefs are clearly written and marked with helpful, evaluative comments. NVQ early years students have weekly meetings with their tutor who provides support in portfolio building. However, assessment and monitoring of NVQ level 1 cleaning and support services students are inadequate.

68. Courses match students' aspirations and build on prior attainment and experience effectively. The curriculum is responsive to local circumstances, with good career pathways and progression routes for students. Many students find relevant employment in day nurseries and care establishments. There is an appropriate range of provision from entry level to level 3.

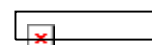
69. Productive links exist with community and external partners. The college, in collaboration with three other colleges, has been awarded CoVE status in 'Career pathways in the National Health Service'. The purpose of the CoVE is to enable local students to progress at various levels, into health care jobs within the NHS. There are good working links with a local NHS trust and university resulting in useful enrichment activity.

70. Support students receive to improve performance is good. Students are initially assessed at the start of their course and any additional learning support needs identified. Learning support workers and key workers are effective. They provide good individual support for literacy and numeracy needs and students' behavioural, attendance or personal problems. There is a well-established tutorial system which is valued by students. Specific targets are not always used in tutorials and tutorial records are not always complete.

Leadership and management

71. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication between members of the course team is good, despite courses taking place on more than one site. The new curriculum managers work effectively together. They provide a clear direction and are clearly focused on raising student achievement. Quality assurance is weak on a few courses. For example, some inadequate assessment and monitoring practice, incomplete internal verification, non-compliance with induction and recruitment procedures, and non-completion of apprentice framework for learners in early years. The college is aware of these issues and is taking action to remedy them. Staff development opportunities are good and two staff have attended the 'Aspire' course for potential career development.

Art and design



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- good individual support
- effective progression pathways in multimedia.

Weaknesses

- low retention rate in national certificate in photography
- limited range of teaching strategies
- poor punctuality.

Scope of provision

72. The college provides a range of art and design courses from entry level to level 3. Full-time and part-time day and evening courses are offered at Wandsworth and Tooting. Courses include: Skills for Working Life, first diploma in design, national certificates in graphic design and photography. Most students are recent school leavers or young adult returners. Some 50% of students are female and the overall cohort reflects the diverse local community. At the time of the inspection, there were 242 part-time and 116 full-time students. Of the full-time students, 70 were aged 16 to 18. At Wandsworth, there are eight specialist studios equipped for jewellery, stained glass, printmaking, computer and digital graphics, photography, design, drawing and painting. At Tooting, there are four specialist studios used for fashion, design, furnishing and cake decorating.

Achievement and standards

73. Most courses have high pass rates, for example, 100% on the first diploma in design. Retention rates are generally satisfactory, but on some courses they are low. In 2004, for example, the 60% retention rate in national certificate was 22 percentage points below the national average. Students in areas such as multimedia, graphics and photography produce a good standard of work. They demonstrate a skilful use of images and colour to provide a personal response to set tasks. Past work from previous graphics and photography courses was recently portrayed as national examples of good practice. The work of graphic design students was exhibited at 'Young Designers at the Design Centre' in July 2004. Poor student punctuality in several lessons negatively impacts on the lessons overall progress and standards. Student progression is good. For example, 92% of students who completed progressed from a first diploma group to the national certificate course.

A sample of retention and pass rates in art and design, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
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GNVQ foundation art and design	1	No. of starts	15	26	15
		% retention	80	69	86
		% pass rate	92	67	92
City and Guilds fashion creative crafts certificate	1	No. of starts	15	55	69
		% retention	93	95	99
		% pass rate	64	73	85
First diploma in design	2	No. of starts	12	*	19
		% retention	67	*	79
		% pass rate	63	*	100
City and Guilds creative skills certificate: jewellery	2	No. of starts	8	14	25
		% retention	75	86	56
		% pass rate	100	92	100
City and Guilds progression award in photography	2	No. of starts	32	61	24
		% retention	59	66	67
		% pass rate	63	60	94
National certificate in photography	3	No. of starts	*	10	15
		% retention	*	75	60
		% pass rate	*	67	89
AS-level art studies and fine arts	3	No. of starts	32	18	15
		% retention	55	65	60
		% pass rate	76	100	89

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

74. The teaching in art and design is well planned. In the better lessons, learning activities are segmented and teachers teach with enthusiasm. Expected learning outcomes are regularly summarised and students are clear about their progress. Handouts are mostly well designed and help to consolidate learning. Teachers explain ideas using appropriate language for the level of the course. In one dressmaking lesson, the group used a worksheet that contained very clear explanations and diagrams. The support given by the learning support worker was very effective. In a graphic design lesson, the teacher gave very effective instructions on how to load and use complex computer software. However, in some lessons tutors use a limited range of teaching strategies. Students are presented with a list of complex aims and objectives with little clarity about how the practical tasks will be achieved. In other lessons, teachers talk too much. Some introductions at the start of lessons exceed 40 minutes. In these lessons, students have few opportunities to contribute and therefore lose interest.

75. Most teachers are qualified and are involved in commercial practice. The college has a number of specialist studios and workshops including four very good specialist areas at Tooting. The multimedia software is of industry standard. The equipment in the photography studio is satisfactory. Most students can use digital photography and manipulate the images on computers. The computers are only available on set days of the week. Technician instructors provide good support in the workshops and lessons. Multimedia, graphics and photography students are able to store their work in special folders on specialist computers. Teachers can access, mark and give feedback on

any archived work.

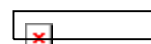
76. Assessment planning and the monitoring of student progress are good. Teachers provide good written assignment feedback. A number of external verifier reports for fashion and crafts highlight good assessment practice. Tutorials are effectively used to discuss individual students' progress towards achieving agreed targets. Students value this process. The range of provision is good and now meets students' needs. Many qualifications have recently been changed or updated. Progression paths are clear. A greater concentration on developing design skills has led to an increase in vocational opportunities. Teachers actively market courses through presentations at local schools.

77. Students are well supported. Tutors know their students well and are sensitive to their different needs. Tutorials are a key feature in this support and students have good relationships with their tutors. Initial assessment and improved interview techniques are effective in identifying learning support needs. Full-time students undertake a six-week induction assignment. It is effectively used to place students on the appropriate level of course. Many students have few formal qualifications. In many lessons, there are key workers. They provide invaluable assistance for students with behaviour or social problems. Students receive high levels of personal support. For example, a young mother received financial help to place her child at a nursery near her home. During lessons, learning support tutors play a positive role. They liaise well with teachers and are involved with planning schemes of work. Teachers are sensitive to students' literacy, language or numeracy needs.

Leadership and management

78. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers feel well supported and work well as a team. Meetings are regular and communication is good. Courses are constantly reviewed and the quality monitored. Staff morale is high. Opportunities for staff development are good and teachers attend a range of training events. Art and design teachers reflect the ethnic diversity of the student population. Cultural diversity is a theme in many schemes of work. The self-assessment report was accurate and detailed with strengths and most weaknesses recognised. Lesson observations are regular and are mostly carried out by external assessors who are art and design specialists. However, the college's grading profile was generous compared to inspectors' judgements.

Media, music and performing arts



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

Strengths

- demanding and stimulating teaching in dance

- very good resources for music technology

- good support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on several courses
- very poor attendance and punctuality in many lessons
- much weak classroom management.

Scope of provision

79. Vocational programmes are offered in performing arts including dance and drama, music practice, music technology and media. The AS-level and GCE A-level film and video studies provision is small. Full-time diploma courses are offered in each subject, but students can additionally choose from a variety of national awards and certificated qualifications. In addition to level 2 and 3 courses, the performing arts offer includes an introductory programme. Media and music courses are offered at levels 2 and 3. In total, there were 391 students following courses, of whom 64% were aged 16 to 18 and the remainder were adults.

Achievement and standards

80. Retention rates are poor on most courses. For students who complete their courses, pass rates are mostly at the national averages. Internal progression from levels 1 and 2 in music and levels 2 and 3 in performing arts is good and often 100%. The proportion of successful students that progress on to HE is satisfactory. AVCE media students are well prepared for HE and can use specialist vocabulary with confidence. Students take responsibility for their own learning and show respect for the importance of language, grammar and punctuation. Punctuality is often very poor with many students arriving over an hour late for lessons. In a number of lessons, attendance is also very poor and this adversely impacts on the collaborative working that is so important to the area of learning. The standard of work in performing arts at level 1 is good, but in some higher-level lessons, students are not reaching expected levels of performance.

A sample of retention and pass rates in media, music and performing arts, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ intermediate performing arts	2	No. of starts	18	23	*
		% retention	89	65	*
		% pass rate	0	33	*
AVCE media	3	No. of starts	23	42	27
		% retention	78	76	70
		% pass rate	83	81	95
National certificate music technology	3	No. of starts	18	36	21
		% retention	89	53	90
		% pass rate	81	79	58
National diploma music	3	No. of starts	37	48	62

technology		% retention	49	48	48
		% pass rate	89	87	77
AS-level film/video	3	No. of starts	*	24	*
		% retention	*	75	*
		% pass rate	*	100	*

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

81. Teaching overall is satisfactory and in dance it is very good. In the good lessons, students learn and work collaboratively without supervision. In some practical lessons, where performance work is shared, some students are passive and are allowed to disengage from class activities. Few teachers have strategies that encourage active learning. Much good teaching is undermined through insufficient attention and emphasis being given to basic classroom management. Teachers are often reluctant to insist on reasonable, but non-negotiable, standards of behaviour from students. The lack of personal and vocational discipline adversely impacts on learning and attainment. In many lessons students are cavalier in approach and attitude, wilfully ignore college rules and are insensitive to their peers and teachers.

82. Resources are mainly satisfactory. The equipment in music technology is very good. Performing arts facilities and accommodation have recently been improved. For example, a new sprung floor, mirrored wall, barres and black-out facilities have had a significant impact on the learning environment for students. However, other allocated spaces are inadequate. Some practical lessons are taught in standard classrooms which are inappropriate. The classrooms are dull and contain little visual stimulation. The television studio has sufficient equipment to enable students to gain practical experience of documentary programme making. While several teachers are well qualified, several although working towards attaining certificates, have no current teaching qualifications. The high levels of staff absence has impacted on the continuity of teaching and learning.

83. Assessment is good. Music staff have designed and effectively implemented an innovative method of tracking students' progress using ICT. Students and staff have immediate access to students' records. The rigour of marking written work in AVCE media is very good. Students recognise that media is not just a visual medium and teachers are vigilant in correcting grammar and punctuation. Regular progress reviews are in place and, where appropriate, parents and guardians are kept informed. Responses to student satisfaction questionnaires are analysed and acted upon. Students confirm that work is marked and returned swiftly.

84. There is a wide range of provision with opportunities for internal progression. Key skills are well integrated into courses and identified in all assignments. Enrichment provision is good and often extends the current experience and understanding of students. Drama students are regularly taken to west-end theatres and productive links have been made with various high-profile theatre companies. Media students have taken part in studio audiences during television recordings and music students regularly have the opportunity to work with current practitioners. Regular visits are made to HE institutions to encourage further progression. Students from diverse backgrounds are welcomed and encouraged.

85. Support for students is good. Individual needs are identified during induction and appropriate support arranged. Students who need specialist help receive it. Tutorials effectively address general issues such as drug awareness and sex health and course-specific issues. Support is sensitive to the highly varied ethnic backgrounds of the students. Regular reviews keep students informed of their progress. Recent, value added initiatives have had some positive impact on retention rates. Student achievement is recognised and they are presented with certificates to encourage continued study. Pre-course information is accurate. Lesson times are often arranged for the convenience of

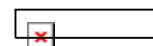
students.

Leadership and management

86. The leadership of the curriculum area is satisfactory. A structured peer observation scheme has been introduced to share good practice in addition to the formal observation of teaching. Special support arrangements for weak teachers are in place and have been successful in improving performance. Course teams are encouraged to timetable regular meeting slots which visiting teachers are paid to attend. Communication is good and all decisions and proposed actions are recorded and reviewed. All course teams contributed to the self-assessment report and the report was mostly accurate. However, the area's own grade was higher than that awarded at inspection. Managers are not effective in challenging poor classroom practice.

87. The college was awarded interim CoVE status in music technology in May 2004. It is making satisfactory progress in achieving its targets in the first year of its business plan although the CoVE manager was not appointed until January 2005. Students have been recruited on to a good range of pre-vocational and vocational courses at levels 1 to 3. The college will shortly be recruiting students for the newly developed short courses for the industry. The college has a good range of resources and the students have access to the latest software. Current and visiting tutors have appropriate recent experience of the music industry. The college has produced an annual operating plan, though many of the targets are not sufficiently specific to enable accurate monitoring of the rate of progress. The overall progress of the development of the CoVE has not been sufficiently evaluated in the self-assessment report.

Modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language



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

Strengths

- high pass rates on most courses
- high retention rates on EFL courses
- much good teaching
- good monitoring and reviewing of students' learning
- wide and responsive range of provision
- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on most AS-level and GCE A-level courses in foreign languages
- poor resources for ILT in classrooms
- inadequate pre-enrolment guidance for modern foreign languages.

Scope of provision

88. The college offers part-time courses in EFL and modern foreign languages. The largest provision is EFL, but only some are funded by the LSC. The modern foreign languages provision is mostly in the evenings, at levels 1, 2 and 3. Most students are adults. The provision includes French, German, Spanish, Italian, Urdu, Russian, British Sign Language (BSL) and community interpreting. At the time of the inspection, there were 285 enrolments on modern foreign languages courses. These included 61 enrolments on AS-level and GCE A-level courses and 124 on language courses accredited by the Open College Network (OCN). The college also offers a wide range of language courses in its adult and community programme which was outside the inspections scope. At the time of the inspection, 117 LSC-funded students were following EFL courses.

Achievement and standards

89. Pass rates on most courses are high. In 2003/04, the pass rate for level 1 modern foreign language courses was 93% and for level 2 courses it was 96%. In all but one of the AS-level and GCE A-level language courses, the pass rate was 100%. In EFL, the pass rates for most courses are significantly above national averages. Retention rates are also high on most courses. On EFL courses in 2003/04, they ranged from 97% to 100%. However, retention rates are low on many AS-level and GCE A-level modern foreign languages courses.

90. Students display good levels of language skill. Most speak confidently and fluently at an appropriate level. Pronunciation in modern languages is good. The best EFL students are comfortable bantering and joking in English. In a GCE A-level German group, students gave five-minute talks with minimal notes, on issues of topical interest such as the legalisation of drugs. Beginners in BSL displayed a good grasp of everyday vocabulary relating to food and drink. The standard of communication in relation to the short time on the course was very good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in modern foreign languages and English as a foreign language, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Preliminary English test (short)	Entry	No. of starts	153	142	195
		% retention	96	95	97
		% pass rate	50	79	74
Beginners' Spanish	1	No. of starts	100	82	61
		% retention	81	87	84

		% pass rate	90	94	92
Community interpreting 1 year	1	No. of starts	15	12	38
		% retention	93	58	87
		% pass rate	100	100	94
First certificate in English (short)	1	No. of starts	254	201	220
		% retention	95	98	99
		% pass rate	53	70	72
Certificate in advanced English (short)	2	No. of starts	206	137	205
		% retention	93	98	97
		% pass rate	41	75	74
Certificate of proficiency in English (short)	3	No. of starts	74	45	48
		% retention	92	100	100
		% pass rate	50	69	65
AS-level French	3	No. of starts	*	16	17
		% retention	*	69	53
		% pass rate	*	100	100

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* course not running

Quality of education and training

91. Much teaching is good. Schemes of work are good and lessons are carefully structured. Lessons include a range of learning activities and tasks which stimulate students and consolidate learning. Teachers respond to different levels of ability within the class by providing a range of learning materials. Mixed group work is often used effectively to maximise learning opportunities. Very good lessons are characterised by vigorous teaching. For example, good use of facial expression, gesture and acting out concepts. Teachers create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere within the classroom. The constant use of the taught language encourages students to speak without embarrassment. The least successful lessons are for modern foreign languages students who are already native speakers of the taught language. Often, the teaching activities in these lessons are uninspiring.

92. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Most modern foreign languages teachers are native speakers with teaching qualifications. EFL teachers are graduates with specialist qualifications. The learning resources in the Putney Learning Centre are good. They contain a wide range of video material, newspapers and magazines in the major languages, individual listening and viewing facilities and access to satellite television. However, in the classroom, ILT resources are poor. Equipment is outdated and unreliable and limits the scope of teaching and learning activities. Wall displays lack impact and some worksheets are dull and uninspiring.

93. At the beginning of all courses, initial assessment is good. Teachers effectively use the results to establish the previous language experience of each student. Class sizes are regularly adjusted to better meet individual need. Student performance is closely monitored and recorded on student record sheets. Overall progress is reviewed termly by course tutors. Teachers provide much informal and regular feedback on homework, assessments and performance in class. Written feedback on homework is generally satisfactory. However, there is sometimes insufficient detail to guide the students.

94. The range of courses is wide and responsive to the needs of students. Students are able to join

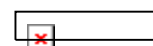
programmes twice a year. Accredited provision successfully builds on the non-accredited community provision. Students are able to transfer between these strands with ease. However, the range of accredited language courses is mostly limited to the major European languages. The community programme includes languages such as Japanese, Hindi, Arabic, Portuguese and Chinese Mandarin. The college is responsive to local demand and has offered: German for a telecommunication company, BSL for the local theatre and French for rail workers. The college works collaboratively with other local providers.

95. Students' absences are closely monitored by staff. They are immediately followed up by postcard, e-mail or telephone. Course tutors monitor registers carefully and send work to students who have missed lessons. Prior to enrolling on a course the availability of language-specific guidance is inadequate. Potential language students are rarely referred to specialist staff for detailed information, although arrangements exist for this to happen.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership and management are good. The course team work well together. The management and planning of the provision is good. Team leaders are in regular contact with teachers and offer a good level of support. Modern foreign languages course leaders have weekly meetings with their managers and liaise regularly with other staff based in other centres. A record is kept of all contacts. Quality assurance processes are effective. Tutors use student surveys, the annual self-assessment process and lesson observations to address quality assurance issues and improve standards. The reviews completed by course team leaders at the end of every course are robust and realistic. Lesson observations are used to identify teachers' further training needs. Good practice is effectively disseminated. The formal procedures for induction of new part-time teachers in EFL are inadequate. They are not explicitly told about basic administrative procedures.

Literacy and numeracy



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

Strengths

- good development of personal and learning skills in literacy and numeracy lessons
- good teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons
- high standard of accommodation and facilities at the Tooting Centre
- wide range of provision in literacy and numeracy
- good support in literacy and numeracy lessons.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates in key skills
- insufficient use of assessment to set and review targets
- ineffective quality assurance.

Scope of provision

97. The college offers foundation courses from pre-entry level to level 2 in literacy and numeracy. At the time of the inspection, 1,133 students were following literacy and numeracy programmes. Of these, 808 students followed part-time discrete literacy and numeracy courses. Students' learning goals are identified in individual learning plans. Progress is assessed against achievement of these goals, if a qualification is not available or appropriate. Some 500 students following vocational courses were receiving additional learning support to meet their literacy and numeracy needs. Many full-time students follow a key skills communications and application of number programme at levels 1 and 2. A team of dyslexia specialists support 93 students.

Achievement and standards

98. Students on discrete literacy and numeracy programmes make good progress. Many achieve their personal objectives and gain new skills. For example, they begin to enjoy reading. Students develop their confidence to learn to work independently and collaboratively. Many students progress from short taster courses to programmes that lead to national qualifications, vocational training or employment. In 2003/04, 522 students achieved a national qualification in literacy and 116 a qualification in numeracy. Pass rates on short adult literacy and numeracy courses are higher than the national average. For many students, a successful outcome is the development of skills that will enable them to become more active members of their community. Pass rates of students entered for key skills qualifications in 2003/04 are poor. Of those who started, only 3% gained the full qualification. However, the pass rates for students who sat the tests in communications, application of number and ICT at levels 1 and 2, were at the national averages. In 2003/04, retention rates on discrete adult literacy and numeracy courses at 85% were good. Student attendance on most courses is satisfactory, but poorer on key skills courses.

Quality of education and training

99. Teaching on discrete literacy and numeracy courses is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a wide variety of activities. ILT is often used well. Students gain confidence to study independently, in pairs and in groups. In one lesson, pairs of students tested each other on key spellings, taking turns to draw word cards randomly from an envelope. Students are encouraged to share their work with each other. A student with identified support needs for dyslexia has had his written work published in a national professional journal. Teaching in key skill lessons is satisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers use their expertise and specialist vocational knowledge to challenge and inspire students. In weaker lessons, teachers often lack the expertise to make learning interesting. They take insufficient account of students' vocational and personal interests. In these lessons, students are not engaged. Support for students with literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. When teachers and support tutor workers closely plan and review student progress together it is good.

100. The standard of accommodation and facilities at the Tooting Centre is high. Most discrete adult numeracy and literacy provision is offered at the centre. Rooms are spacious and comfortable. They provide an appropriate setting for effective teaching and learning. Tutors and support workers are able to circulate freely around the classroom. The ICT equipment in teaching rooms is good. Students have good access to additional learning resources that support independent study. For example, a group preparing for an entry into book-keeping examination had access to a wide range of accounting books. Staff are generally well qualified. The college offers a good training and development programme. The availability of staff to provide additional literacy and numeracy support for the 500 students with an identified need is good. However, the number of teachers available to meet the increasing demand for discrete literacy and numeracy provision is insufficient. Many classes are very large.

101. Assessment practice is inadequate. Formative assessments and general monitoring of progress are not used systematically to inform students about their progress and achievements. Individual learning plans contain targets, but they lack precision and are not reviewed regularly. The arrangements for initial screening and diagnostic assessment are satisfactory. The college has developed some good vocationally specific assessments. The systems for verifying the validity of individual learning plans are satisfactory, but are not applied with sufficiently rigour.

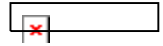
102. The literacy and numeracy curriculum offer is well structured. Students can progress from taster courses to national qualifications. Initial interviews and assessments are effective in helping students to choose the right course. The use of multi-sites, including community centres to offer the provision, is an effective strategy. Literacy and numeracy teaching is often well disguised to create more appealing courses. The strategy has been successful in attracting non-traditional students back into formal learning. For example, kite making and literacy, aromatherapy and literacy, basic skills book-keeping, driving theory courses and customer care. In 2004/05, the college's approach to key skills provision changed dramatically. All students aged 16 to 18 are now entered for key skill qualifications and the staffing and teaching methods have been reviewed. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these changes.

103. Support for students in literacy and numeracy lessons is good. Students receive effective learning support from trained support tutors and volunteers. Students' individual learning needs are taken into account. Individual tutorial assistance is offered to all students. The take-up is good and students benefit from this support. The standard of learning support available for students on vocational courses is satisfactory. In better lessons, the tutor has specialist knowledge of the main qualification. The teacher and tutor work closely to help students to keep progressing. In a minority of lessons, there is ineffective planning and poor use of the tutor's time. Specific individual help is given to key skills students who need aid. This includes appointments at the key skills centre. Students receive good personal support from teachers.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers set a clear direction that is understood by staff. The restructure of the Skills for Life directorate was skilfully managed. Staff morale is high. Staff meetings are frequent and communications are good. Teachers benefit from working at a number of centres. Teachers and tutors attend a good range of training and development activities. New staff are mentored by experienced staff. Literacy and numeracy support staff hold or are working towards teaching qualifications. Resources are well managed. Provision is constantly reviewed to meet local community needs. Awareness and promotion of equality and diversity issues are satisfactory. Quality policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. However, quality assurance remains ineffective. The standard of information in individual learning plans is sometimes poor and reviews are often incomplete. Despite auditing, target setting remains weak, particularly in learning support and key skills. Students' work files are poorly organised. There are plans to increase the rigour of lesson observations. The self-assessment report was mostly accurate. Well-planned strategies are in place to improve key skills teaching.

English for speakers of other languages



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

Strengths

- good vocational ESOL courses
- effective language support
- successful development of students' confidence and motivation
- effective strategies to improve punctuality and attendance.

Weaknesses

- ineffective measurement of students' progress and achievements
- insufficient attention to individual learning needs
- ineffective quality assurance
- insufficient focus on speaking and listening.

Scope of provision

105. The college offers a wide range of ESOL provision at six levels, from entry level 1 to level 2 at four main sites. Separate courses for students aged 16 to 19 are offered at the two largest centres in Wandsworth and Tooting. Some provision is offered as part of a franchise arrangement and a small amount is community based. The provision has three key elements: ESOL courses for discrete groups, vocational ESOL courses that combine vocational subjects such as child care, hair and beauty and office skills with the teaching of ESOL and general ESOL support for students following traditional courses. Many discrete courses are run in parallel to accommodate the large number of students. Student numbers in this area have grown rapidly since 2002. At the time of the inspection,

there were 1,346 students following one of the key ESOL elements.

Achievement and standards

106. Students' general progress and achievements are satisfactory. Most students carry out the activities set by their teachers and complete assignments to a satisfactory standard. They apply themselves conscientiously to their studies. Students at all levels and from all backgrounds are confident to speak out in lessons. Students receiving language support, and those on courses where ESOL is taught in a vocational context, achieve well. For example, in one lesson, students used difficult conceptual language in the context of child development, well above the level expected. Effective language support enables students to gain vocational skills and prepare good evidence for their portfolios. Many students who receive support move on to employment, with some progressing to more advanced courses, and occasionally into HE. Work in the files of ESOL students following an access to health course, showed improvement in their writing skills, planning, and time management. The college had previously identified students' punctuality and attendance as serious issues. Improvements during 2004/05 have lifted attendance patterns close to the national average. Where franchised provision is provided near to the college, students progress successfully to higher-level courses at the college.

107. The college does not systematically measure and evaluate students' overall achievements or progress. The number of students following externally accredited courses at the main sites is low, but higher for franchise provision. Students all have an individual learning plan, but these are not sufficiently detailed to enable students' overall achievement to be measured or recorded. Targets are often not relevant or challenging. The links between students' long-term goals, their assessments, the targets on their individual learning plans and the teaching they receive in class are weak. Individual student progress against set targets is not monitored or recorded in lessons. Insufficient attention is paid to students' previous learning and experiences of education.

Quality of education and training

108. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The standard of teaching on vocational ESOL courses and in support lessons is better than that in the discrete provision. Teaching plans are detailed, but do not highlight specific activities that will address students' individual learning needs. With different degrees of success, teachers mostly use standard approaches to teaching. Students are taught in whole-class groups. They are required to carry out the same activities within a set timescale. Only some teachers make minor adjustments to meet students' different needs and abilities. Too little attention is given to the development of students' skills in speaking and listening.

109. Resources are satisfactory. Most accommodation is attractive and well maintained. Attractive displays of students' work are common. Many rooms contain a suite of computers and some have interactive whiteboards. However, in many lessons, teachers rely too heavily on worksheets and sometimes rely on poorly copied extracts from published sources. Most staff are well qualified, with the majority having ESOL specific teaching qualifications.

110. Assessment and monitoring of progress are unsatisfactory. Arrangements for measuring student achievement are inadequate. Students' records indicate activities that students have completed and not what they have achieved. Much written work is unmarked. Assessment at the end of courses is not undertaken rigorously and many students progress to the next level without a full assessment of their skills.

111. The extent to which programmes meet the general needs and interests of students is satisfactory. The provision is extensive at all levels, and offered at many venues. Vocational courses that include ESOL teaching are well designed. ESOL students wishing to follow discrete courses can often enrol on a course close to their home. Franchise arrangements with community organisations are effective and enable the language needs of specific groups to be met. However, students who join a particular class must all follow the same programme, whatever their reason for wishing or needing to learn English. There are few courses designed to meet individual needs, interests and aspirations.

112. Students have satisfactory access to advice and guidance prior to starting a course. Initial assessment is carried out for all ESOL students. Students' literacy levels are used as an indicator for placing them on courses that are mapped against the national core curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are not assessed formally. Vocational students with ESOL needs are promptly interviewed, assessed and offered support. This includes classroom support, discrete ESOL sessions and workshops. Vocational teachers can also refer students for language support. Tutorial records indicate that discussions about ESOL students' progress and achievements rarely take place.

Leadership and management

113. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication is effective across all centres, franchised and community provision. Standard procedures are uniformly applied across all centres. Part-time teachers, who make up 60% of the teaching in this area, are paid to attend essential meetings and staff development activities. However, staff development is not used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Appraisals are carried out annually with termly progress reviews. Franchised provision is well managed. A dedicated manager ensures that there is good liaison and teachers are involved with staff training opportunities. Quality assurance procedures are not effective in assessing the curriculum area's effectiveness. Teachers are observed teaching annually. Weaker teachers receive support to improve. However, at the time of inspection, this has not led to high standards of teaching. Self-assessment is not sufficiently rigorous or accurate.

Part D: College data

Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2003/04

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	46	54
2	29	16
3	18	8
4/5	0	2
Other	7	20
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age 2003/04

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
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Science and mathematics	267	621	5
Land-based provision	0	20	0
Construction	32	85	1
Engineering, technology and manufacture	43	387	2
Business administration, management and professional	233	1,537	10
Information and communication technology	272	4,230	26
Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	16	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	127	101	1
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	89	119	1
Health, social care and public services	238	1,400	9
Visual and performing arts and media	302	731	6
Humanities	0	251	1
English, languages and communication	175	1,604	10
Foundation programmes	734	4,004	28
Total	2,512	15,106	100

Source: provided by the college in 2003/04

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	387	511	519	2,123	2,273	2,624
	Retention rate %	69	72	70	72	74	65
	National average %	75	70	75	73	74	71
	Pass rate %	76	77	73	76	81	78
	National average %	64	65	73	68	68	76
2	Starters excluding transfers	548	536	398	1,886	1,462	1,132
	Retention rate %	63	66	71	67	74	75
	National average %	70	70	70	70	69	68

	Pass rate %	67	63	67	71	72	75
	National average %	67	68	73	65	69	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	880	430	227	1,583	1,034	762
	Retention rate %	60	63	73	62	69	72
	National average %	67	75	75	67	69	67
	Pass rate %	64	68	82	67	72	76
	National average %	70	73	76	65	69	73
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	77	56	87
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	58	48	78
	National average %	**	**	**	65	67	70
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	52	70	65
	National average %	**	**	**	69	74	79

Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary colleges with a high number of students from disadvantaged areas).

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2001 to 2003: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2003.

2. College rates for 2001 to 2003: College ISR.

** numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

*** data unavailable*

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	65	31	4	52
Level 2 (intermediate)	55	43	2	44
Level 1 (foundation)	54	41	5	39
Other sessions	55	40	5	55
Totals	57	39	4	190

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