



GREENWICH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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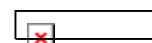
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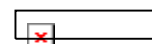
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Basic information about the college

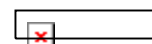


Name of college:	Greenwich Community College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Geoff Pine
Address of college:	Main site: 95 Plumstead Road, London, SE18 7DQ
Telephone number:	020 8488 4800
Fax number:	020 8488 4899
Chair of governors:	Iain Smith
Unique reference number:	130405
Name of reporting inspector:	Jane Knox
Dates of inspection:	8-12 October 2001

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



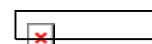
Greenwich Community College was formed in 1998 by the merger of Woolwich College, the only further education (FE) college in the London borough of Greenwich, and Greenwich Community College, the largest provider of adult education in the borough. Teaching takes place in 11 main centres and in 30 smaller satellite centres in different parts of the borough. The college is in an area with high levels of social deprivation and unemployment; there is a high proportion of low-income families, many of whom are single parents.

The college enrolls approximately 11,000 students annually, of whom 80% are over 19 years of age. Of these, about 15% are on Learning Skills Council (LSC) funded full-time vocational courses, 65% are on part-time vocational courses and just over 20% are on adult community courses provided on behalf of Greenwich Borough Council. There are few work-based students. Only FE and work-based learning were inspected.

The college recruits a high percentage of students from disadvantaged areas. The average age of students has risen steadily over the last three years to 32. Half of the college's students are from minority ethnic groups. Some are refugees and asylum seekers. A significant number do not speak English as their first language; 77 different languages are spoken by students. Some 60% of students are female and 40% are male.

There is extensive provision for groups that have not normally entered FE. The college offers courses which lead to a wide range of vocational, academic, professional and technical qualifications. The college's mission requires it 'to create opportunities for learning throughout life which respect diversity, enable learners to achieve the highest standards, are cost effective and built on partnerships.' The college 'will act vigorously in the event of discriminatory behaviour of any kind taking place within any of its centres.'

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be satisfactory. Education and training are good in humanities and English, languages and communications; unsatisfactory in science and mathematics; and satisfactory in the other seven curriculum areas. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- extensive range of provision which reflects the needs of the community and is accessible to a wide range of people

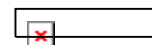
- co-operative links with schools, universities, commerce, industry and the local community
- effective teaching in many areas
- comprehensive and effective support for students
- good retention rates
- many students derive great benefit from their work in college and make good educational progress.

What should be improved

- poor teaching in some areas which fails to interest and motivate students
- students' low pass rates in some subjects
- quality of student related management information
- lack of rigour in the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and students' achievements by some curriculum teams
- poor attendance and punctuality amongst students
- availability of information technology (IT) equipment and learning resources for students based at the satellite sites.

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

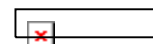


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and maths	Unsatisfactory. Retention and pass rates are unsatisfactory on a significant number of courses. Science teaching is satisfactory. Mathematics teaching is unsatisfactory. There is good support for individual students through science workshops.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Satisfactory. Much teaching is well planned and delivered effectively, particularly in practical lessons. The standard of students' portfolios is good. Retention rates are high. On motor vehicle courses, pass rates and students' punctuality are poor. Some courses lack sufficient specialist equipment.
Business administration and management	Satisfactory. Retention rates are high on many courses. Teaching is generally well organised and relevant to commercial life. Support for students is good. There are low pass rates on many courses and poor retention rates on general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) business studies.
Information and communications technology (ICT)	Satisfactory. Students benefit from the comprehensive range of IT courses. The standard of practical teaching is good. There is effective support for individual students. Results on the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) IT course are excellent. There are low pass rates on some part-time courses, and inadequate accommodation and equipment at some of the satellite sites.
Sports, leisure and travel	Satisfactory. The wide range of courses meets individual student's needs. The quality of teaching is generally good. Students gain relevant additional qualifications. Most students develop appropriate practical skills and professional practice. Results on the general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses are above the national average. Retention and pass rates on the same courses are low.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. Access students achieve consistently good results. Teaching is effective in the majority of lessons. There are good links with the local community. Students benefit from strong personal support. Pass rates on the GNVQ advanced and first diploma courses are well above the national average. Pass rates on the GNVQ foundation course and on some national vocational qualification (NVQ) courses are unsatisfactory.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory. The portfolio of creative arts courses caters well for the needs of adults. On creative arts courses, teaching is good and students achieve well. The standard of teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18 is less satisfactory. GCSE and GCE A-level art results are poor.
Humanities	Good. There are good levels of achievement on access and GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) / A-level courses. Students make good

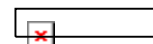
	progress relative to their prior achievements. Students receive strong support from teachers. Teaching is of a good standard. Pass rates on some GCSE courses are declining.
English, languages and communications	Good. Courses meet the needs of the local community. Retention rates are high. The quality of teaching is good. There is effective support for individual students. Students make good progress relative to their prior achievement. Attendance is poor in some classes.
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and basic skills	Satisfactory. Courses contribute to the widening of participation among adult students from minority ethnic groups. Much of the teaching is good. There is strong support for all students. Students' achievements on ESOL courses are good. Some basic skills students lack clear learning goals.

How well is the college led and managed?



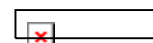
Leadership and management are satisfactory. Financial management is sound. The college provides adequate value for money. Leadership is open and responsive. Internal communications are good. The strategy for widening participation is succeeding. Arrangements for quality assurance are clear and well understood. Policy and practice on equal opportunities are impressive. Weaknesses in the college management information system have restricted the uses to which data have been put. Curriculum management is satisfactory overall, but some teams have not rigorously monitored the quality of education and training and students' achievements.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



Provision for groups that have not normally entered FE is a high priority. Regular reviews of the provision for minority ethnic groups, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged groups in the community are carried out. Strategies to increase participation from these groups and to challenge stereotypes in the choice of courses have had an impact on the curriculum. Their success is indicated by the fact that many courses do not reflect typical patterns of enrolment and attract students from many countries and cultures. Some 50% of the college's students are from a minority ethnic background, which compares favourably with the local population. The college is making a significant contribution to the borough's single regeneration plan, whose aims to raise the aspirations of, and increase access for, the local population are leading to a substantial growth in adult education in the area.

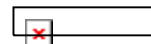
How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Guidance and support for students are good. The college provides impartial advice and information for prospective students. Students are able to enrol throughout the year. There are effective arrangements to accredit students' prior learning. The majority of students receive a well-devised

including counselling, and advice and guidance on welfare matters such as housing and finance. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Provision for careers guidance and support is good.

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

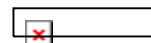
- college is a stimulating and friendly place to study
- students feel secure in the college
- accessibility of college staff and their concern to help students make progress
- availability of valuable advice on higher education (HE) and employment
- wide range of enrichment activities supplement students' main programmes of study
- wide and well-publicised range of advice and guidance services which meet students' requirements well.

What they feel could be improved

- some group tutorials are poorly delivered
- some part-time students do not receive adequate support
- access to advice and guidance at some of the smaller satellite sites

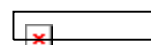
- number of and access to computer workstations at centres away from the main Plumstead site.

Other information



The college has two months to prepare an action plan in response to the report. It must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors must agree the plan and send copies of it to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

Part B: The college as a whole



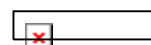
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect & 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	60	24	16
19+ and WBL*	62	30	8
Learning 16-18	52	30	18
19+ and WBL*	59	33	8

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

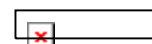


1. The range of courses offered by the college is extensive. Many vocational courses are provided including NVQs, GNVQs and national certificates and diplomas. The college also provides courses for professional qualifications, for example, those of the accounting technicians. Thirty subjects are

a small amount of work-based training.

2. Since the last inspection, the college has set and met a target for students' retention that is above the national average for general FE colleges. Overall retention rates at levels 1 and 2 for all students, and at level 3 for adult students, are now well above national benchmarks and rising. Pass rates for 2000/01 at level 1 for adults, and at levels 2 and 3 for students aged 16 to 18, are better than for 1999/2000. Overall, students' pass rates in 2000/01 are similar to, or below, the national average. The proportion of students progressing to FE and HE has increased steadily.

16-18 year olds



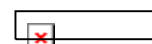
3. The staying on rates for students aged 16 at school or FE in the college's catchment area are substantially below the national average. Many new students enter the college with very modest levels of prior achievement. The college provides learning support and encourages students to gain qualifications appropriate to their aspirations and ability. In this it is successful, and with very few exceptions students comment favourably on their learning experiences. Retention rates are generally good. Some courses have retention rates of 100%. Despite this, the pass rates on level 1 courses give cause for concern as a substantial number of students leave without a formally recognised achievement.

4. Many students on level 2 courses make appropriate gains in knowledge and understanding given that a high proportion have poor numeracy and literacy skills on entry. Standards achieved in practical classes are usually good. Most students are making satisfactory progress in developing their IT skills and some are using these to good effect, for instance, in recording information for their course files. While retention rates are generally good, students' success rates vary widely across the college.

5. A substantially greater number of students aged 16 to 18 study vocational and academic level 3 programmes. The entry qualifications of students are often low. On GNVQ and national diploma courses, many students learn to carry out practical work safely and with good levels of competence. Most students develop a good balance of appropriate practical skills and supporting knowledge. Students do not always achieve GNVQ awards in the expected time. Results are variable between curriculum areas. Given the wide range of students' ability on entry to courses, students' achievements in GCE A-level examinations are satisfactory and sometimes good. Assignments and other written work from students are generally of appropriate quality. Students often demonstrate good levels of understanding and make perceptive contributions during group discussions. Some students with lower entry qualifications are making progress above the national average, but other students with higher qualifications on entry are not performing as well as expected.

6. Generally, students aged 16 to 18 on courses at all levels are making satisfactory progress in developing their key skills. Many are using these to good effect in recording information. Students who have visual impairments are being particularly well supported. However, in some curriculum areas opportunities for developing IT skills are limited, sometimes to an extent which impairs students progress in the subject.

Adult learners



7. A significant proportion of adult learners come from groups where there is no tradition of

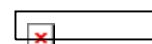
college for the first time or returning to acquire further training. The college's flexible, open-access policy allows some students to progress at a slower pace and to attain accreditation over a longer period than is normal. The college has been successful in enabling some students with very limited initial educational achievements to progress from pre-foundation courses to HE.

8. Some students on level 1 short courses have made outstanding progress in a short time. Retention rates of 100% have been achieved on some courses. Students' work is generally well presented. The majority of students demonstrate good practical skills. Those who attend regularly often achieve well. Achievement data sometimes show relatively low numbers of students gaining qualifications within a given time-scale. On some courses, a significant number of students who acquire the appropriate level of skill, choose not to enter for accreditation. Overall at level 1, pass rates have improved, although they remain below the national averages.

9. The flexibility of much of the college's provision at level 2 enables students to progress and achieve their goal at a speed that suits their aspirations and abilities. A substantial proportion of adult students study vocational programmes. Many students prepare for the examinations of specialist technical and professional bodies. Most students make good progress acquiring relevant skills and developing their confidence. Students on NVQ and professional courses are able to draw effectively on their own vocational experiences. Pass rates vary. In some curriculum areas examination results are well above the national averages; in other areas there are some indifferent results. GCSE results are similarly varied.

10. On level 3 access to HE courses students make significant progress in a short time. Students who complete their courses achieve well. Most students progress to HE. Some students achieve high standards of competence. Retention rates on level 3 courses are good overall. Pass rates on GCE AS/A-level, NVQ and national diploma courses are less satisfactory. The results in GCE A levels vary between, and within, individual subjects. Results have been at, or below the national average in many subjects, although some have improved significantly in 2001. On NVQ and vocational diploma courses, pass rates are often below the average for general FE colleges. Achievements are generally better in the one-year courses.

Quality of education and training



11. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 188 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 61% of these, satisfactory in 27% and less than satisfactory in 12%. In most areas the practical teaching was of a higher standard than the teaching in theory lessons. Teaching on courses for adult students was generally better than that on courses for students aged 16 to 18. Attendance and punctuality were poor in some classes.

12. Teachers tried hard, though not always successfully, to meet the needs of individual students on level 1 courses and to enable them to work at their own speed. The majority of lessons were well planned and prepared. Students were involved in a range of activities and their attention was maintained successfully. Teachers explained topics carefully and used questioning techniques that encouraged students to build on their existing knowledge. Students were encouraged to assess their own work, and record their own progress and achievement. Teachers frequently checked students' progress during lessons. Students with specific learning difficulties were given every assistance to participate fully in classroom activities. In less successful lessons, teachers talked too much and failed to engage and maintain the students' interest. Students were expected to complete the same work and progress at the same rate, regardless of their experience and ability.

13. Most teachers coped well with the wide ability range in many level 2 classes. The majority of lessons involved a variety of teaching methods and carefully sequenced activities to motivate and interest students. Assignment briefs were clear, concise and unambiguous. Teachers checked that students understood what was required of them and provided positive, detailed and encouraging

advice and guidance to students requiring help. Teachers carefully used the experience of employed students to draw attention to the industrial relevance of topics. In some vocational classes, too much use was made of simulated work experience. Students plainly found some of the GCSE lessons dull and uninteresting; this resulted in low levels of achievement by students who were inattentive.

14. The majority of level 3 lessons were structured clearly and provided students with a range of learning activities, the most successful of which were well-managed practical activities and class discussions. Exposition by teachers was clear and relevant and supported by good visual aids and handouts. Practical teaching sessions offered an appropriate mix of activities aimed at building students' technical skills. Technical staff provided good support in workshop and practical sessions. Teachers dealt sensitively with difficulties individual students had with their learning. In some areas, practical skills were developed and assessed in the college rather than in the workplace which would be more appropriate. During theoretical work in the classroom, students spent too much time copying notes from the board. There was intermittent attendance and poor timekeeping by some students.

15. Assessment procedures are well defined and reflect standards which are in keeping with the levels of courses and the requirements of examining bodies. Students' achievements are assessed on a range of evidence. Course teams for NVQ, GNVQ and national diplomas keep good records of students' practical work. Written coursework and homework for GCSE and GCE A-level students are marked conscientiously by subject teachers. The majority of staff keeps detailed records of progress, assessment and internal verification, though documentation for recording progress and for action planning is not yet consistent for all courses. Work has begun on the internal verification of standards to ensure proper standardisation of assessment practice across curriculum areas.

16. Most teachers are academically well qualified, have relevant vocational expertise and are appropriately matched to the courses on which they teach. The majority have first degrees or equivalent professional qualifications. A high proportion, 93%, holds formal teacher qualifications. Good progress has been made by members of staff gaining awards as assessors and verifiers. A minority of staff lack the IT skills which are necessary for teaching or administration. Recent industrial experience is lacking in some curriculum areas. Some staff need to update their professional and vocational experience. Part-time teachers bring valuable current industrial and professional experience to the classroom; some have little teaching experience which can lead to poor quality teaching. Technical and administrative support staff provide good support for teachers.

17. The college endeavours to make access to study as easy as possible for the greatest number of students. As a consequence, many courses are provided on more than one site. Extensive upgrading of the main Plumstead site has created an attractive learning environment. Well-equipped workshops and learning centres provide facilities for students who cannot attend college regularly, or who wish to work on their own at times which suit them. More modest study centres have been established on the smaller satellite sites. The quality of most general classroom accommodation is satisfactory. The provision of specialist equipment to support teaching and learning is generally good and sometimes outstanding. The satellite venues in the community are maintained in a satisfactory condition, although some have classrooms that are too small for the classes using them, and others have too few computers for students' needs. Good progress has been made in improving access to learning for students with restricted mobility.

18. The college has strong and varied community links which enable it to assess and respond to community needs. Staff take an active role in the planning and delivering of local large-scale regeneration projects. Collaborative working with local schools is well established. Links with commerce and industry are extensive. The college undertakes numerous collaborative ventures with colleges and organisations elsewhere in the United Kingdom and overseas, and has productive links with local universities. Market research is successfully used to identify potential demand and to develop new courses. The college aims to provide its students with a programme of education that has balance, breadth and variety. Students are encouraged to undertake additional qualifications and take part in the enrichment programme.

19. The college is particularly responsive to the individual needs of students with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities. There is a well-developed infrastructure of support for these students at all stages of their college career. The college welcomes students with physical disabilities and they are supported with sensitivity and discretion. Students with sensory impairments and specific learning difficulties, for example dyslexia, are well supported by specialist staff. Appropriate equipment is provided. Qualified individual support workers act as communicators or note takers and materials are modified so that they are appropriate to the needs of students.

20. Student services are wide and comprehensive. The information provided for prospective students in schools and in the local community is of good quality and highly regarded. The college has developed flexible arrangements for enrolment, advice and guidance all year round. Leaflets and personal advice are available on college courses, services, finance and other matters of importance to students. Admissions staff offer potential students general advice and specialist teachers follow this up with more detailed information. Arrangements for accreditation of students' prior learning are good. The enrolment process is handled efficiently. There have been instances where students have received incomplete information from staff. Late applicants may experience delays.

21. Most students receive a welcoming and detailed introduction to the college. Induction for students includes a formal introduction to the college facilities as well as tours of the building which focus on the refectory, learning workshops and student support facilities. The pattern varies according to the requirements of each course.

22. The process of identifying and supporting students who need help with literacy and numeracy is good. Initial assessment identifies students who might experience difficulties with the literacy and numeracy aspects of their course. Constructive support is provided on a drop-in basis through the independent learning centres or through timetabled slots built into students' learning programmes.

23. All full-time and most part-time students have tutorial support, usually for a minimum of one timetabled hour each week. There are no formal arrangements for adult students on short courses although, in practice, many students receive tutorial support. The detailed tutorial programme is organised around a termly theme and delivered through a series of mandatory and optional activities. Most students regularly review their progress with their tutor. Students are appreciative of the support they receive from their teachers and tutors. The quality and effectiveness of tutorial support varies from excellent to poor, but the majority is good. Some students regard the group tutorial programme as unproductive and some group tutorials are poorly attended.

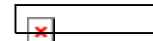
24. The college provides valuable personal, welfare and financial counselling and administers hardship and access funds and other assistance to help students complete their courses. The college has an effective professional counselling service which has helped many students in personal difficulties to continue their studies. Practical problems, often involving financial difficulties, are dealt with effectively.

25. The college has its own student activities team. Team members work enthusiastically and energetically to provide students with a range of enrichment activities which complements the more formal work of the college. Students are encouraged to participate in the activities of the college and to make their views known.

26. Procedures for addressing students' poor punctuality and absenteeism vary widely. There is rigorous monitoring of punctuality and attendance on some courses. However, in other areas, little is done to address the problem. The college takes the need for punctual and regular attendance very seriously. Strategies to address the problem are a high priority in 2001.

27. A well-developed and carefully structured programme of careers advice is delivered by teachers. Careers guidance is available as a group activity through the tutorial programme, or on an individual basis. The college team works closely with the local careers service. Effective advice on HE choices and job application procedures are available to all students.

Leadership and management



28. Since the last inspection, the merger of Woolwich College with Greenwich Community College has been successfully completed. The governing body and the principalship have led the college through a period of significant change. Governors' wide ranges of experience and contacts have proved to be a valuable asset to the college. The board has a clear view of the strategic direction of the college and of its mission in the local community. Its members are well informed and committed to the college's success. The college has made good progress in establishing an organisation with common goals and values and a single culture. An open and consultative style of management is combined with a clearly communicated vision of the role of the college in the community. The revised management structure is clear and well understood by staff.

29. At the previous inspection, rates of attendance, retention and achievement were identified as a weakness. Since then a major strategic objective has been the raising of retention and students' pass rates. The college has been successful in meeting its retention rate targets. Students' retention rates have improved to well above the national averages. Measures to improve students' pass rates have been only partially effective. While some improvement is evident, there remains poor pass rates on a number of individual courses.

30. The college's computerised management information systems are being improved but discrepancies remain between student-related data produced centrally and those held by course teams. Some of the data used for self-assessment were unreliable and resulted in some generous judgements about performance. The college has made steady progress in improving its quality assurance procedures. Good practice is increasingly disseminated through curriculum area and support services' teams. Targets are set for retention, attendance and pass rates but actual performance has not always been systematically reviewed.

31. Governors have agreed on the strategic priorities for the college. The process for planning and review at strategic and operational levels is well structured, understood and implemented. Department teams are fully involved in the production of plans which contribute to the college's strategic plan. The current strategic plan sets out clearly identified priorities that provide an effective framework to guide the decisions of curriculum managers.

32. The college's commitment to continually improve the quality of provision is highlighted in the mission statement, the strategic plan and the operating statements. There is a well-planned quality assurance cycle and calendar of activities with clearly defined procedures and responsibilities. As part of the cycle, curriculum teams are required to set targets for the retention and pass rates of students and monitor these, together with destinations of students. In practice, however, there is little monitoring of pass rates on many courses.

33. There is a well-planned systematic approach to self-assessment. Course and subject reviews are at the heart of process. However, there are wide variations in the way different course and subject teams complete reviews and evaluations. Some reviews give insufficient attention to teaching and learning.

34. Procedures for disseminating good practice in teaching are generally underdeveloped. Lesson observations are a requirement of both the staff appraisal and self-assessment processes. Currently, part-time teachers are not included in the lesson observation programme. The annual appraisal system for staff is well established. The need for staff development is identified from lesson and task observations, reviews and self-assessment. The staff development activities are prioritised to meet the college's strategic objectives and the individual needs of staff.

35. The standards committee takes an overview of quality in the college and receives regular reports on quality assurance from the academic board and managers. Enrolment targets, retention rates and attendance are closely monitored. Specific and realistic targets for retention rates have

been set and achieved. As the committee has identified, there is a need for a more focused analysis of management information on the full and partial achievements of students.

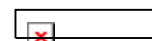
36. College structures have undergone considerable changes. In this way, the college has increased operational effectiveness and reinforced its ability to respond to local needs. There is a strong emphasis on team building and teamwork among staff. Arrangements for consulting staff and for keeping them well informed about developments in the college are good. Regular newsletters and meetings with staff contribute to good communication and a shared sense of purpose in the college. The management style of the college enables staff and students to feel confident about making proposals and taking initiatives. There has been a gradual increase in the amount of delegated responsibility. This has now reached course level. Curriculum managers and co-ordinators are given autonomy to exercise their initiative in day-to-day operations.

37. The quality of course management varies, but is generally satisfactory. In the better run areas, curriculum managers have coped well with the changes which have been introduced following the merger and they provide effective leadership of their area. Course teams meet regularly to consider matters such as curriculum planning and quality assurance, the progress of students and the development of new courses. In other areas, management is not effective. For example, there is no clear focus for the management of some subjects across the college; little formal communication or joint planning between some related areas of the curriculum; similar courses on different sites operate independently of each other and practical matters such as rooming and timetabling are poorly managed. Teams are less involved in planning; communications between teachers and managers are poorer; course administration is weaker; and some part-time teachers receive insufficient help and support.

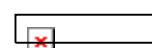
38. There is a strong and genuine concern amongst staff to encourage the development of people's ability to the full. Considerable effort is devoted to removing artificial barriers to admission, recruitment and promotion and to attract students and potential staff members from a borough that has high levels of social deprivation. The detailed equal opportunities policy applies to all aspects of the college's work. Guiding principles, detailed practices and monitoring arrangements are well documented. Implementation of the policy is carefully monitored by a committee with cross-college representation which audits teaching, learning and promotional materials and strengthens and builds on good practice. High priority is given to equal opportunities issues in staff training and student induction programmes. Staff and students have a good awareness of equal opportunities issues. Students are appreciative of the college's approach to equal opportunities.

39. The college's financial management is good. The college has built up a healthy financial position which has enabled it to undertake major improvements and developments to its accommodation and learning resources. The method for allocating resources within the college is clear and well understood. Curriculum managers and other budget holders must work within the budget allocated to them. The process has succeeded in raising managers' awareness of the cost-effectiveness of their courses and has led, in some instances, to a review of alternative methods of curriculum delivery.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and maths



Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- regular setting and effective marking of homework
- good support for individual students through science workshops
- effective use of IT in science lessons
- strong technical support in science.

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics
- poor retention rates on GCE A-level science and mathematics
- low pass rates on many courses
- inadequate action to improve the quality of teaching.

Scope of provision

40. The college offers GCSE and GCE AS/A-level biology, human biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and further mathematics. There is a pre-GCSE course at level 1 for those students who are not ready to attempt GCSE. An access to HE course in science and mathematics enables adults with few formal qualifications to progress to HE. There are currently 295 students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses and 37 adults on part-time access and GCSE mathematics courses. Several classes have few students. Mathematics staff also help students on courses in different curriculum areas with the key skill of application of number.

Achievement and standards

41. Retention and pass rates in this programme area are unsatisfactory. Examination results vary widely. Too many students do not complete their courses and do not sit the examinations. Students on the pre-GCSE course develop confidence and competence as they learn to cope with the college environment. However, in 2001, none of these students progressed to GCSE science courses. GCSE mathematics courses attract large numbers of students, many of whom retake mathematics to improve their grades. GCSE mathematics and biology students are not achieving appropriate

levels of knowledge and understanding, as is evident from the consistently low pass rates in both subjects. GCSE chemistry, human biology and physics results improved in 2001 and are now slightly better than the national averages.

42. The quality of GCE AS/A-level students' written work and other assignments is variable. In science, students handle apparatus competently, and carry out practical work safely. Most students are able to apply theoretical concepts to the findings of experiments and demonstrate their understanding when making observations, recording results and drawing conclusions. The performance of GCE A-level chemistry students is very good. Many mathematics students have poorly developed IT skills, sometimes to an extent which impairs their progress in the subject. Success in examinations is poor. Often this is mainly due to poor retention rates. For example, of the 36 students enrolled on GCE A-level mathematics in 2001, less than a third completed the course. The performance of GCE A-level mathematics and physics students has been consistently below national average standards in these subjects.

43. Adult students on the access course make good progress acquiring appropriate skills. Students draw on their own experiences in analysing theories, absorbing new concepts and handling conflicting arguments. Most use appropriate vocabulary and display satisfactory levels of understanding. The majority of students finish the course and a significant number progress to HE.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Science and maths, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE biology grades A*-C	2	No. of starts	40	18	19
		% retention	65	72	74
		% pass rate	35	15	36
GCSE mathematics grades A*-C	2	No. of starts	385	241	150
		% retention	69	84	77
		% pass rate	17	17	30
GCE A-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	31	47	36
		% retention	97	38	31
		% pass rate	33	39	72
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	16	17	21
		% retention	94	29	48
		% pass rate	53	100	90
GCE A-level physics	3	No. of starts	18	23	21
		% retention	94	35	62
		% pass rate	35	43	62
Access to HE science and mathematics	3	No. of starts	15	16	19
		% retention	93	94	89
		% pass rate	57	66	59

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

44. The department has taken some steps to increase accessibility to its courses. The pre-GCSE mathematics provision caters for students for whom a qualification below the level of GCSE is

appropriate. The access to science course provides preparation for adults with few formal qualifications who wish to progress to HE. The science workshop provides students who need it with additional support, and enables other students to do extra work on their own outside formal lesson times. The range of courses offered to potential science students is narrow. There are no vocational science courses.

45. In science, the teaching is satisfactory overall. Classroom activities regularly include presentations, laboratory work, workshops and discussions. Careful attention is paid to working safely. Teachers make effective use of demonstrations to stimulate students' curiosity and help to increase their understanding of the subject. Teaching materials are used imaginatively to encourage students to analyse topics in depth. Teachers make good use of IT to enhance students' studies. Homework is set on a regular basis. Work submitted is carefully marked and returned promptly, with appropriate written comments to help students improve their performance. Students get regular feedback on their progress. There is insufficient constructive regular feedback to parents about the progress of students aged 16 to 18. Students are provided with good support in their applications for places in HE.

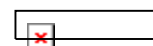
46. A significant proportion of mathematics lessons are unsatisfactory. In many lessons, the teaching is dull and undemanding, students spend lengthy periods listening to the teacher and become bored. Lesson planning takes little account of the range of ability in a class. Students are often expected to complete the same work and progress at the same rate, regardless of their experience and ability. Less able students struggle to complete the work. In the better mathematics lessons, teachers invite discussion and handle it well. They use questions and answers effectively to involve students, elicit students' ideas and test their understanding of topics. Teachers pay inadequate attention to the development of students' IT skills.

47. Teaching staff are well qualified. Skilled and well-trained science technicians provide effective support for laboratory work. Most general classrooms are suitably furnished and equipped. The specialist science and mathematics accommodation is satisfactory for the courses offered. There is sufficient science laboratory equipment available for current needs. The lack of IT facilities in mathematics classrooms prevents students from using appropriate software in lessons.

Leadership and management

48. Management at course level is the responsibility of curriculum managers who are responsible for staffing, resources and course management in their respective subject areas. Curriculum managers meet regularly with their associated subject teachers to discuss quality issues and identify areas for improvement. There is insufficient emphasis on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, identifying and sharing best practice in teaching methods and developing appropriate teaching strategies for mixed ability groups. Subject teams undertake regular analysis of students' achievements but the data used are not reliable, consequently teams do not have an accurate picture of student retention and passrates.

Engineering, technology and manufacturing



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

Strengths

- much well-planned and effectively delivered teaching, particularly in practical lessons

- good standard of students' portfolios
- good retention rates
- range and quality of motor vehicle equipment.

Weaknesses

- lack of appropriate resources in the cramped machine shop
- poor pass rates on motor vehicle courses
- students' poor punctuality and erratic attendance at motor vehicle lessons
- insufficient work experience placements for students.

Scope of provision

49. An appropriate range of engineering courses is provided to meet the needs of students, and clear progression routes from levels 1 to 4. Students can choose study attendance patterns which meet their study needs. Currently, 62 students aged 16 to 18 are undertaking full-time GNVQ intermediate and advanced engineering courses and a range of motor vehicle and electrical installation NVQs. There are 462 part-time adult students working towards qualifications which include the Edexcel national certificate in electrical and electronic engineering, City and Guilds electrical installation testing and electronic servicing, and NVQs in light vehicle mechanics, motor vehicle body repair and electrical installation.

Achievement and standards

50. Full-time students aged 16 to 18 develop a balance of practical skills and supporting knowledge and are able to demonstrate their understanding when undertaking assignments. Students undertake practical work competently and with informed awareness of health and safety. They demonstrate satisfactory levels of competence in the use of equipment, and handle tools competently and confidently. Students' portfolios are well presented. Much of their written and other assignment work is of a good standard. Some students find difficulty with the mathematical content of courses. There are examples of poor grammar and spelling in the written work of students. Students' responses to tests demonstrate that most are reaching standards appropriate to their abilities and the levels of the courses they are following. Pass rates vary considerably from course to course. Pass rates are particularly poor on motor vehicle courses. Students' late arrival at a

number of lessons adversely affects teaching and learning.

51. The majority of adult students demonstrate good study skills working both individually and in groups. They work safely and competently in workshops. Individual projects undertaken by students are of a good professional standard. The best make frequent references to tasks students carry out in their place of work. Students maintain a detailed portfolio of evidence setting out the competences they have achieved. Some students' work shows weaknesses in basic mathematics; the communication skills of a significant minority are also weak. Part-time adult students are generally regular in their attendance. Retention rates on most courses are good, particularly at level 1 and level 2. Students who wish to continue their studies achieve a good rate of progression to the next course level. Students' achievements in examinations give a very mixed picture; some are good but overall success rates are low. Motor vehicle results vary from moderate to very poor.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Engineering, technology and manufacturing, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ vehicle maintenance	1	No. of starts	30	15	*
		% retention	70	91	*
		% pass rate	52	50	*
NVQ engineering foundation	2	No. of starts	29	17	*
		% retention	90	100	*
		% pass rate	54	53	*
NVQ vehicle mechanics and electrical systems unit replacement	2	No. of starts	33	22	*
		% retention	76	68	*
		% pass rate	24	27	*
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	12	27	*
		% retention	100	72	*
		% pass rate	58	69	*

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data not yet available

Quality of education and training

52. The college offers a range of courses which meet the needs of local students. Most part-time courses have starting dates throughout the year. Unemployed students can attend at times to suit their personal commitments. Employed students attend on days left free by their shift patterns. Many of the large companies that once dominated the engineering industry in the borough have closed down resulting in insufficient work experience placements being available for students.

53. Practical teaching is good. Activities are generally well chosen to meet the needs of students aged 16 to 18. There are good schemes of work and lesson plans. A strong emphasis is placed on safety. Assignments set by teachers are of an appropriate standard. Practical tasks set in the workshop are used to develop craft skills. Demonstrations of technical equipment by teachers are common. Students usually have the opportunity to ask questions. Teachers regularly check the level of students' achievements. Assessment procedures are fully documented and well managed. Technical staff provide good support in workshop and practical lessons. In a minority of lessons, the teaching is insufficiently prepared. Access to relevant computer systems and software applications is restricted.

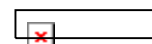
54. Adult students are given good opportunities to reinforce their theoretical understanding by engaging in closely related practical activities. Assignments are well designed. Students work on a well-planned schedule of practical tasks. Teachers take good account of individual student's needs. Good support from teachers allows students to work successfully at their own speed. In many lessons, informative and effective demonstrations are used to support learning. Teachers carefully track individual student's performances. Practical assessments nearly always conclude with students being asked to test and verify their work, and demonstrate that the task has been successfully carried out. In the weaker lessons, students spend too much of their time copying notes.

55. Resources for teaching are mainly sufficient and some are of a good quality. The accommodation varies in quality but is adequate overall. Some of the specialist accommodation is of a high standard. Most teachers have practical experiences that are appropriate to their specialist teaching and display sound knowledge and understanding of their subject areas. The motor vehicle workshop is well equipped with up-to-date engine diagnostics equipment. The machine shop is cramped, there is a shortage of specialist engineering equipment, and the lack of sufficient specialist computer hardware and software is inhibiting the development of students' IT skills.

Leadership and management

56. Most engineering provision is well organised. A clear organisational structure defines staff roles. Communication across the department is good. Courses are carefully planned and co-ordinated. Course leaders maintain detailed and up-to-date course files giving information on the management and operation of courses. Teaching teams review performance at regular meetings. These meetings provide a positive focus for the development of engineering. Problems raised by student representatives and surveys are followed up. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process. Action plans address weaknesses and are regularly monitored. There are clear procedures for internal verification but they are not applied consistently.

Business administration and management



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

Strengths

- well-planned lessons and schemes of work
- effective support and encouragement provided by teachers
- high levels of retention on many courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on many courses

- poor retention rates on GCE A-level business studies.

Scope of provision

57. A wide and varied curriculum covers GCSE, GCE AS/A level, GNVQ at intermediate and advanced levels, advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE), NVQ level 1 to level 3, access to HE and Association of Accounting Technicians awards (AAT) at level 2 to 4. There are good opportunities for progression. Currently, 124 full-time students aged 16 to 18 are following GCSE, GCE AS/A-level, GNVQ intermediate and GNVQ advanced/AVCE courses. Over 300 part-time adult students are enrolled on AAT courses in accounting; NVQs in administration; and short courses in business technology and text processing and computerised accounting. There are 37 adult students on the access to HE course.

Achievement and standards

58. A wide range of standards of attainment is evident on business courses. Pass rates vary widely across the curriculum area. Retention rates are generally good. Results for GCE A level are appreciably above the national average, but retention rates are low. Students work purposefully and effectively to produce work of a good standard. They make particularly effective use of IT to produce charts and graphs. GCSE pass rates are at the national average. Much GCSE work is well structured and well presented, although there are some weaknesses in the standard of writing and spelling. The poorest achievement is on GNVQ courses where pass rates have declined to well below the national average. Some assignments and portfolios of students' work show good analytical skills, but others lack depth and are poorly presented. A significant number of GNVQ students have poor levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy and this hinders their studies.

59. Adult students make appropriate gains in knowledge and understanding given the wide difference in their abilities and educational backgrounds. Significant numbers of adults progress through the different course levels to reach employment or HE. On the access to HE course, most students complete their studies and achieve the qualification. Written work demonstrates appropriate evidence of primary research. Students are skilled in the use of computers and work with a range of appropriate software. Most adult students on short courses complete their course, but a significant proportion do not choose to take advantage of opportunities to have their achievements accredited. Course files and assessed work show evidence of effort, progress and good IT skills. AAT students' completed work is accurate and well presented. Students speak knowledgeably about their studies. Although many students take longer than average to complete their courses, the eventual rate of NVQ achievement is good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Business administration and management, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	13	13	14
		% retention	77	100	86
		% pass rate	10	46	33
GCSE business studies	2	No. of starts	40	9	17
		% retention	38	100	70
		% pass rate	75	67	66

AAT/NVQ 2	2	No. of starts	42	44	*
		% retention	88	84	*
		% pass rate	38	46	*
GNVQ advanced business	3	No. of starts	9	21	12
		% retention	100	43	66
		% pass rate	22	100	33
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	18	36	16
		% retention	94	58	56
		% pass rate	38	75	88
Access to HE business studies	3	No. of starts	**	31	20
		% retention	**	97	70
		% pass rate	**	66	93

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data not yet available

** course not running

Quality of education and training

60. The college has developed flexible ways of organising its business courses to enable adults with other commitments to achieve additional qualifications and progress to employment or higher-level courses. Many of the part-time courses for adults are modular and may be taken over an extended period of time. This allows students to gain accreditation when they are ready to do so.

61. In most lessons, teaching is carefully planned to meet the needs of students. In GCE A-level and GCSE lessons, teachers use a well-judged mix of activities to introduce new topics and to strengthen earlier learning. They use their commercial experience to good effect to provide practical illustrations and students respond well to this. Assignments are set regularly and marked promptly. Teachers give students detailed guidance on how they can improve their work. In the best GNVQ lessons, the objectives of the work are clearly stated and teachers ask searching questions to check the understanding of students. In the weaker classes, activities are not set in the context of what has been taught before and the different tasks are poorly co-ordinated and related.

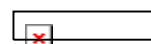
62. On part-time courses for adults, teaching is generally well organised and relevant to commercial life. Clear schemes of work and lesson plans ensure that students are set appropriately challenging tasks and understand the context in which they are working. Students' interest is maintained by appropriately varied activities and methods of working. Teachers use carefully prepared handouts to support their teaching. Students are given plenty of opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations. Workshop activities are well structured and cater for a variety of student abilities. Teachers use, to good effect, students' work experience and skilfully use questioning to challenge their thinking. They keep careful records of progress and assessment, and provide effective support and guidance for students. In some weaker classes, work is poorly planned.

63. Most teachers are academically well qualified and have relevant vocational expertise. The provision of equipment and IT resources to support academic and vocational work is generally good. Students are able to make full use of the specialist facilities in the Plumstead IT centre, which includes access to the Internet. Most lessons take place in rooms that are well equipped with teaching aids. Learning resources, such as handouts, are often of good quality. At the satellite sites, in some lessons, there are insufficient computers for the number of students in the group.

Leadership and management

64. Courses are effectively managed. Staff roles are clearly defined, and responsibilities are effectively delegated. There is a cycle of staff meetings which are well documented and where implementation of action agreed is regularly monitored. Resources and staff expertise are shared across courses for the benefit of students. Communication between staff is good. Managers are accessible and ready to listen to teachers' views. Part-time teachers are generally well supported and are strongly encouraged to participate in course development, meetings and training. Teachers attend regular updating and training events. The results of student surveys are used to improve teaching and learning.

Information and communications technology (ICT)



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

Strengths

- comprehensive range of IT courses
- good standards of practical teaching
- extensive range of IT equipment and software at Plumstead
- good support for individual students.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on some part-time courses
- inadequate teaching accommodation at some satellite sites
- some teachers' lack of recent industrial experience
- weak co-ordination of IT provision across college sites.

Scope of provision

65. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time computing and IT courses including introductory and retraining programmes. Courses are available at a large number of venues, including the main and satellite sites, centres in the local community and at the premises of collaborative providers. There are 110 students aged 16 to 18 on full-time GCSE IT, GCE A-level computing and GNVQ foundation, intermediate and advanced/AVCE courses in IT. Some 1,150 adult students are undertaking part-time courses leading to modular qualifications in IT at levels 1, 2 and 3 including computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT), Royal Society of Arts (RSA) computer literacy and London Open College Network (LOCN) modules in IT.

Achievement and standards

66. Students aged 16 to 18 on the GCSE course achieve excellent results. Retention rates are well above the national average. Students produce work which demonstrates good understanding of their subject. Their projects are well researched, clearly written and well presented. GCE A-level retention and pass rates are close to the national averages. Most students gain good knowledge of programming. Some students develop exemplary computer programmes with clearly laid-out exploratory notes. A few assignments are not well presented.

67. GNVQ intermediate students' coursework and assignments are of a satisfactory standard and show that students can apply the theory they have learned to solve problems. The completion rate is very good. Pass rates have fluctuated with poorer results in 2001, than in 2000. The quality of work that GNVQ/AVCE students collect in their portfolios is satisfactory. Students are adept at using word processing software. Much work is well structured and well presented, although there are weaknesses in the standard of writing and spelling. Pass rates have improved to just below the national average. Only half of the students who started, completed the course. Student attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

68. Adult students' results and retention rates on part-time courses vary widely but are mainly satisfactory, sometimes good. Some courses have high numbers of students who complete their courses but do not enter for examinations. Significant numbers of CLAIT students complete their courses, but on average less than a third achieve the qualification. Some students have made outstanding progress in a short time on the LOCN courses. Students are supportive of each other and highly motivated. They contribute readily to classroom activities, and are able to draw on their own experiences in analysing theories, absorbing new concepts and handling conflicting arguments. Most students achieve a satisfactory level of technical and practical skills in computing.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Information and communications technology (ICT), 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
CLAIT	1	No. of starts	949	509	*
		% retention	81	94	*
		% pass rate	27	29	*
GCSE IT	2	No. of starts	69	37	14
		% retention	54	76	86
		% pass rate	27	47	100
City and Guilds IT	2	No. of starts	**	25	*
		% retention	**	100	*

		% pass rate	**	64	*
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	19	22	14
		% retention	100	73	93
		% pass rate	37	69	54
GNVQ advanced IT	3	No. of starts	20	20	20
		% retention	50	30	50
		% pass rate	80	34	70
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	14	31	23
		% retention	100	39	61
		% pass rate	22	17	72

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data not yet available

** course not running

Quality of education and training

69. Computing and IT programmes make a significant contribution to the strengthening of links with the local community and to widening participation and the development of IT in the borough. Students can enrol on part-time courses throughout the year and attend on any day of the week.

70. The teaching of students aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses is well managed. Teaching schemes and assignments build upon work previously covered. For part of the time, students are encouraged to work on their own, through a series of tasks, learning for themselves. Teachers produce high-quality handouts and work books to support these activities. They welcome questioning and use this effectively as a means of checking students' understanding. The encouragement of students to use technical language is a strong feature of lessons. Efficient records of students' progress are kept and students are regularly informed of their progress. The less successful lessons are dull, inhibited by the technology, and fail to interest students. Punctuality and levels of attendance in some classes are poor.

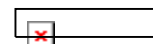
71. On part-time courses for adults, the teaching method most used is that of practical work supported by good individual tuition and, at times, by general class discussion. Teaching is set in an industrial context to ensure relevance. There is an appropriate emphasis on using industrial standard software and the development of important workplace skills such as communications. Technical information is communicated at a level appropriate to the stage of the course and the abilities of students. Students have good opportunities to tackle real or realistically simulated problems and to apply programming principles to meet the requirements of clients. During whole group work, teachers make appropriate interventions, using relevant and topical examples to reinforce points made by students. Some teachers allow a few students to dominate the lesson, while the rest of the class remains passive. Absenteeism is a problem in some classes.

72. Most teachers have industrial, commercial and professional experience, but some of this experience is not recent. Teaching accommodation is well maintained and most is of an acceptable standard. The Plumstead IT centre houses a comprehensive range of networked computers and software. Students using the centre can work at a pace that suits them; in some cases this enables them to make rapid progress. On some of the satellite sites there are too few computers for the number of students who wish to use them.

Leadership and management

73. Course co-ordination and teamwork on the Plumstead site are good. Regular meetings take place to review progress and monitor action plans. There is insufficient contact between the IT course manager at the Plumstead site and those at the satellite sites. Managers at the satellite sites have developed their IT courses and resources independently. The amount of IT equipment, the effectiveness with which it is deployed to support the curriculum, and the quality of the IT provision varies from satisfactory to good between sites. No procedures are in place to ensure routine exchange of good teaching practice.

Sports, leisure and travel



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

Strengths

- wide range of courses to meet individual student's needs
- most lessons well planned
- students gain relevant additional qualifications
- effective individual support for students
- good specialist facilities and accommodation at Charlton Athletic Club.

Weaknesses

- some low retention and achievement rates
- a few teachers' lack of recent industrial experience
- lack of work placement programme for full-time leisure and tourism students
- inadequate records of students' progress

- insufficient access to computers at Charlton Athletic Club.

Scope of provision

74. The college provides a wide range of courses in this area. Sport and leisure provision includes Edexcel national certificate and diploma courses in sports science, NVQs in sport and recreation at levels 2 and 3, City and Guilds awards in recreation and leisure studies and sports progression, and professional awards in areas such as community sports and coaching. The college also runs GNVQs at foundation, intermediate and advanced/AVCE level in travel and tourism, Edexcel travel industry certificates and professional travel industry awards. There are currently 93 full-time students, most of whom are aged 16 to 18, and over 150 part-time students, aged 19 or over.

Achievement and standards

75. Students' career prospects are improved by the achievement of additional qualifications to their main programme. Greenwich is a popular leisure and tourism centre and job opportunities are plentiful. Often, employers offer students employment on the basis of the additional qualifications that they achieve before completing their main courses.

76. GNVQ intermediate students are developing appropriate practical skills and professional practice. Students work well when studying in groups and most develop good communication and teamwork skills. Course files are generally of a good standard. Assignment work is well researched. Pass rates have improved and are now well above national comparisons.

77. The work produced by GNVQ advanced/AVCE students shows an ability to relate concepts effectively to real world situations. Most students show satisfactory standards of practical competence and implement appropriate safety precautions in practical lessons. The better written work demonstrates good subject knowledge and an orderly approach to problem solving. Pass rates are consistently above the national average.

78. Pass and retention rates on the national diploma in sports science are poor. Current analysis indicates that the main reasons for non-completion are to secure employment. Most students develop the skills of working in teams, and undertake practical work competently with informed awareness of health and safety aspects. The best student assignments display thorough research and the ability to evaluate different viewpoints. Others are poorly written and the content lacks depth.

79. The overall results for City and Guilds subjects are satisfactory. Adult students demonstrate high levels of motivation and commitment. They learn to work well both alone and as members of teams. Self-esteem and personal confidence are important objectives, which most students achieve. Students competently apply their knowledge and skills in a wide variety of practical applications and contexts. The majority achieves good progression rates to other training or HE.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Sports, leisure and travel, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds recreation and leisure studies	1	No. of starts	27	19	14
		% retention	96	95	100
		% pass rate	45	68	57

GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	17	14	9
		% retention	88	79	67
		% pass rate	41	31	67
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	7	22	17
		% retention	100	55	71
		% pass rate	86	41	53
Edexcel national diploma in sports science	3	No. of starts	**	**	10
		% retention	**	**	40
		% pass rate	**	**	20

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

** course not running

Quality of education and training

80. Open access and a strong commitment to the local community are central to the ethos and practice of the curriculum area. Teachers' links with external organisations demonstrate their commitment to widening participation.

81. The quality of teaching in GNVQ/AVCE leisure and tourism classes is generally good. Extensive use is made of group work, role-play, simulations and presentations, and students respond well to these methods of working. Teachers develop and explain topics carefully. Key skills are well integrated with vocational work. Students receive good individual guidance and support. Tasks are often followed up by visits to employers when the students can witness comparable activities in a real working environment. The less effective lessons lack commercial realism and do not give students sufficient insight into the practice and ethics of the industry. There is no work placement programme to extend students' knowledge and skills.

82. Teaching is effective in the majority of sports science lessons. Students are able to benefit from teachers' productive links with industry. Most lessons are set in a relevant vocational context. Well-designed handouts contain comprehensive guidance for students. Teachers skilfully direct the working of students in pairs, in groups, in plenary sessions, or as individuals. They provide extensive individual help, but are equally skilled at fostering students' independence. Activities undertaken are carefully linked to students' work experience and outdoor activities. The teaching of sports science is given professional relevance through the use of the Charlton Athletic Club which provides students with first-hand experience of real work. In some lessons, students have insufficient opportunities to develop their IT skills.

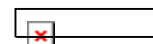
83. Lesson planning on City and Guilds courses is thorough and careful. The quality of much of the teaching is good. Students' interest is maintained by the variety of learning activities and by the relevance of the material to students' intended careers. Teachers value and make good use of students' own knowledge and experience. Occasionally, they failed to ensure that all students had grasped what was being taught.

84. Courses are generally supported by sufficient equipment. Sports science students benefit from undertaking lessons at the Charlton Athletic Club which is equipped to a high specialist standard, although the number of computers is insufficient to meet the requirements of all students. Some full-time teachers do not have recent experience outside education. They have insufficient knowledge and experience of current practice to help students to gain insights into the requirements of the industry.

Leadership and management

85. Management responsibilities are clear. Course leaders work well together to plan, develop and deliver a wide range of courses designed to widen participation and meet the needs of the local community. Students' progress is regularly monitored but the progress review sheets which record the extent to which students have acquired vocational and key skills are not being kept up to date. Regular team meetings and course reviews identify areas for improvement but they place insufficient emphasis on the effectiveness of teaching and learning and do not identify the principles of good practice and share these with one another.

Health and social care



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

Strengths

- broad range of courses
- effective links with industry and the local community
- good personal support for students
- good pass rates on the access to nursing course.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates on the GNVQ foundation course and on some NVQ courses
- some poor-quality facilities at the satellite centres
- insufficient attention in some lessons to the development of students' key skills.

Scope of provision

86. The college offers a wide range of provision in health and social care from foundation level to level 4. There are 120 adult students enrolled on foundation and access to nursing courses and 110 adult students are taking NVQs in care, early years care and education, and playwork at levels 2, 3

or 4. Over 100 adult students are working towards counselling certificates validated by LOCN and the professional counselling body. There are 30 students aged 16 to 18 on first and national diploma courses in caring and early years, and 30 on GNVQ foundation and advanced/AVCE courses in health and social care.

Achievement and standards

87. Adult students on access to nursing courses consistently achieve good results. Students' portfolios display a sound theoretical understanding of key issues and an appreciation of current work practices. Students demonstrate the ability to effectively plan and present the findings of each learning activity. Students' oral contributions in class and written responses to assignments show that high levels of knowledge and understanding are being achieved.

88. In recent years, a large number of NVQ students did not complete the qualification. This year, the pass rate has improved. In lessons and in the workplace most students, through their oral contributions and their written and practical work, demonstrate standards appropriate to the level of their course. The best students' portfolios have well-presented evidence and demonstrate a good standard of knowledge. For some students, weaknesses in literacy and numeracy inhibit their progress.

89. Pass rates of students aged 16 to 18 on the GNVQ advanced-level course in health and social care have improved significantly and are well above the national average. Students' lesson notes and records of practical work are well ordered and detailed. Students work well in small groups and they are confident about feeding back information to the whole group. On the GNVQ foundation course students' achievements are well below the national average. Many students lack appropriate skills in IT, numeracy and literacy and this affects the standard of their work.

90. Results on the national diploma in caring services, although currently satisfactory, have fluctuated between outstanding and poor in recent years. The majority of students carry out practical work competently and safely, often working productively in groups and pairs. Student assignments are neatly presented and use well-chosen case studies to illustrate theoretical aspects. Pass rates on the first diploma are good. There has been a marked improvement in pass and retention rates in 2001.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Health and social care, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	12	**	9
		% retention	100	**	78
		% pass rate	33	**	29
First diploma in caring	2	No. of starts	**	19	8
		% retention	**	18	88
		% pass rate	**	41	100
NVQ in early years care and education	2	No. of starts	33	59	*
		% retention	61	81	*
		% pass rate	0	38	*
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	**	15	5
		% retention	**	73	80
		% pass rate	**	33	100
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	13	12	7

caring services		% retention	100	55	71
		% pass rate	54	100	75
Access to nursing	3	No. of starts	124	196	180
		% retention	91	91	78
		% pass rate	73	91	88

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data not yet available

** course not available

Quality of education and training

91. Recent changes to the provision have attracted students from groups which have not usually been involved in FE. Access programmes, designed for adult students, provide good opportunities for those without traditional qualifications to gain entry to education or to enhance their job prospects. There are strong links with industry. Work experience for students complement the teaching effectively. Individual support for students at every level is good.

92. Access to nursing course classes are particularly well taught. Students are encouraged to contribute in such a way that any lack of understanding or of recent experience is turned to positive account and becomes a useful basis for discussion. In this way students' confidence is increased. A wide range of teaching methods, including open questioning, exercises and project work, is used to keep students interested and learning effectively. Students' work is set and assessed at the correct level and constructive written comments from teachers enable students to improve their performance.

93. Teaching on NVQ courses is generally of a satisfactory standard. Teachers pay attention to relevant industrial practices, make good use of students' work experiences, and are skilful in relating theory to practical examples. In the weaker lessons, assignment tasks are over-prescriptive. There is little opportunity for students to ask questions or to discuss their own ideas. Teachers pay insufficient attention to the integration and assessment of key skills.

94. Most GNVQ advanced-level lessons are effectively taught and offer students a range of suitably challenging tasks. Lesson objectives are made clear to students and frequent checks are made to ensure that students understand their work. Students are well informed about their progress. In general, key skills are poorly integrated with other elements of work.

95. Teachers on national diploma courses prepare the subject content of lessons well. Assignment tasks are well focused. Practical activities are especially successful. In the best lessons, teachers encourage students to draw on their own personal experiences, and use persistent questioning to ensure students understand key concepts and use appropriate vocabulary. A minority of lessons end ineffectively without a proper summary of the work covered.

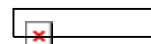
96. There are sufficient well-qualified and experienced teaching staff to cover the range of programmes. The provision of specialist equipment to support learning is generally satisfactory. On the main sites, teaching accommodation is fit for purpose. At the smaller venues, classrooms are sometimes too small for the size of groups that use them and there is a shortage of computers.

Leadership and management

97. The management of the curriculum area is generally effective. Students' progress is, for the most part, carefully recorded. The quality of provision is monitored through regular team meetings. Monitoring of enrolments by ethnicity, age and gender has been undertaken and has led to some

positive initiatives. For example, positive action has been taken to redress the gender imbalance on some courses and existing courses have been modified to take account of students' needs. There is strong teamwork and course leaders share materials freely. However, they pay insufficient attention to sharing good teaching practices and to developing the teaching skills of part-time teachers.

Visual and performing arts and media



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

Strengths

- a portfolio of courses that is responsive to the needs of adults
- effective and enthusiastic teaching on creative arts courses
- good standard of adult students' practical work
- well-equipped specialist workshops.

Weaknesses

- poor results of students aged 16 to 18 in GCSE and GCE A-level fine art
- poor personal research and exploratory work of students aged 16 to 18
- poor student punctuality disrupts lessons
- unsatisfactory accommodation and inadequate learning resources at some small venues.

Scope of provision

98. The college offers a wide range of City and Guilds and LOCN creative arts courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. There are clear progression routes from level 1 to level 3. Currently, 430 part-time and 119

full-time adult students are enrolled on creative arts courses. The college is reviewing and reorganising full-time general art and design courses for students aged 16 to 18 following a decline in recruitment in recent years. The pre-degree course and the GNVQ intermediate course failed to recruit in September 2001. The GCSE and GCE AS/A-level fine art courses have attracted only 20 students.

Achievement and standards

99. Adult students' work is of an appropriate standard. The quality of coursework and other assignments is generally good. The majority of students are acquiring a good understanding of their subject and are able to apply what they have learned to solving problems and carrying out practical tasks. Practical work is well presented and demonstrates that students have developed professional skills and acquired specialist knowledge and understanding. Students are able to evaluate the quality of their own work and that of their colleagues, and to explain their ideas in a detailed and articulate manner. Students tackle activities in the studios and workshops with enthusiasm and clearly take pride in their achievements. Some are using the experience to redirect their careers and change their way of life.

100. Adult students on creative arts courses make worthwhile progress over a period of time. Pass rates on most courses are at about the national average. A substantial proportion of students on level 1 and 2 courses progress to other FE courses. Adult students on the access to HE course have been particularly successful in progressing to further study. Retention rates on most courses for adult students are satisfactory and are improving.

101. Pass rates of students aged 16 to 18 are below, or well below, the national average. The pass rate in GCSE fine art has been particularly weak with pass rates well below the average in each of the past three years. Students' work on the GCSE course does not reach appropriate standards. The drawing skills of GCE AS/A-level students are insufficiently developed. Students' exploratory work lacks rigour and ideas are not fully realised. Students' oral contributions in class show poor levels of understanding and application. Retention rates on the GCSE and GCE A-level courses are below sector averages.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Visual and performing arts and media, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds textiles and interior design	1	No. of starts	105	137	*
		% retention	66	81	*
		% pass rate	89	67	*
City and Guilds craft	2	No. of starts	61	200	*
		% retention	64	85	*
		% pass rate	62	63	*
GCSE fine art	2	No. of starts	24	13	12
		% retention	71	92	75
		% pass rate	24	42	22
GCE A-level fine art	3	No. of starts	9	20	26
		% retention	100	50	69
		% pass rate	25	90	72
Access to HE (modular)	3	No. of starts	47	47	*
		% retention	62	66	*

		% pass rate	52	81	*
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Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

* data not yet available

Quality of education and training

102. The introduction of the creative arts programme has contributed to the widening of participation among adult students. The portfolio of courses caters well for the needs of adults, providing good quality preparatory training for people who are returning to learning after a significant break from education and seek to gain formal qualifications and progress to FE and HE.

103. Teaching on the creative arts courses is effective. Teachers meet the needs of adult students with widely differing abilities and experiences, many of whom are studying after a significant break from education. They ensure that students are fully engaged in activities which suit their aptitude and aspirations and help to develop their professional skills. Students benefit from lessons which have purpose and direction, and which engage their interest. Teachers give good individual support to students and provide them with help to enable them to undertake tasks which challenge them to think creatively and use their technical skills. Assessment is fair and reliable. Students are able to apply the assessment criteria. Teachers encourage students to assess their own work individually and in groups. Most students are able to comment accurately and realistically on their progress.

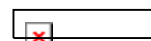
104. Standards of teaching on GCSE and GCE AS/A-level courses for students aged 16 to 18 are weak. Most teachers talk too much and the work fails to sustain students' interest. Teachers do not ensure that students understand the requirements of assignments and the order in which the work is to be carried out. They fail to help students with their design skills or to promote their visual development. Many classes are disrupted by students arriving late. The full-time GCSE and GCE AS/A-level provision is narrow and involves gaining qualifications through external examination. This has proved to be an unsuitable route for many of the college's students aged 16 to 18.

105. The provision of specialist equipment and materials to support teaching and learning is generally adequate in quality and quantity. There is variation between the facilities available at the main sites, where the accommodation is extensive, and those at the smaller venues where work in some classes is restricted by the lack of suitable space and learning resources. Academic staff and technicians have a wide range of professional expertise. The industrial experience of part-time teachers significantly enhances the relevance of the creative arts courses for adults.

Leadership and management

106. The creative arts provision for adult learners is managed by the department of creative and cultural studies. The GCSE and GCE AS/A-level provision for students aged 16 to 18 is run by the general education department. Creative arts course management is effective; the management of the GCSE and GCE courses is unsatisfactory. The two departments work individually. The management of the various components of the provision across the college is unco-ordinated. Effective quality assurance has been hindered by the lack of teamwork which inhibits the sharing of ideas and good practice.

Humanities



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

Strengths

- good levels of achievement on access and GCE AS/A-level courses
- well-planned and well-managed lessons
- encouragement and support by staff of individual students
- good progress of most students relative to their prior achievement
- effective promotion of equal opportunities
- good course management.

Weaknesses

- declining pass rates on GCSE courses
- poor punctuality of some students.

Scope of provision

107. The inspection covered government and politics, psychology, and sociology. As part of its general education provision, the college offers these subjects at GCSE and GCE AS/A level, in one-year and two-year options and through daytime and evening provision. The general education provision also includes an access to humanities course for adult students who wish to progress to HE to undertake a degree in humanities or in a related subject area. Currently, 65 full-time students aged 16 to 18 and 30 part-time adult students are undertaking GCSE and GCE AS/A levels and 35 adult students are enrolled on the access course. An open access policy is pursued.

Achievement and standards

108. GCSE students' grasp of subject matter and their progress in gaining the necessary level of comprehension and application are satisfactory. Students reach an appropriate standard in their oral work and are able to make effective and confident contributions in class. Most students produce written work of a good standard, but a minority merely narrates texts and are unable to analyse beyond a superficial level. Retention rates are satisfactory; pass rates in 2001 declined to below the national average. Students' poor punctuality sometimes disrupts learning taking place.

109. Examination results for GCE AS-level government and politics, GCE A-level psychology and GCE AS/A-level sociology are good. Pass rates in GCE A-level government and politics, psychology and sociology have steadily improved to above the national averages. Value added data indicate that, on average, students have performed better than expected. Most students demonstrate a good level of subject knowledge and an ability to apply theoretical concepts. The majority readily takes part in discussions and the standard of their contributions to debate is good. Written assignments are well structured, show good understanding, and reveal development of reasoning and maturity of expression. A few students' work is marred by poor spelling and incorrect grammar.

110. Adult students on the access to HE programme demonstrate good levels of academic achievement in their assignment work. Students apply and understand a range of research methods and are able to criticise methodology and content. Written work is generally well presented and clearly structured, and appropriately illustrates the skills of synthesis, analysis and evaluation. Students work well in groups. Most students are articulate and confident and participate readily in debate. Many students demonstrate that they read beyond the requirements of the syllabus. A significant proportion of students progress to a wide range of courses and HE institutions.

A sample of retention and pass rates in Humanities, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE sociology	2	No. of starts	**	17	21
		% retention	**	76	76
		% pass rate	**	69	50
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	23	39	18
		% retention	91	84	75
		% pass rate	33	57	78
GCE A-level psychology	3	No. of starts	40	38	28
		% retention	83	71	82
		% pass rate	70	52	87
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	17	34	14
		% retention	82	79	72
		% pass rate	44	59	70

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

** course not running

Quality of education and training

111. The college's provision in humanities is responsive to the needs of the borough's residents, many of whom are from a minority ethnic background. The access programme enables adult students who have not gained formal qualifications to enter HE.

112. In GCSE lessons, most teaching is of a good standard. Teachers use a variety of methods to engage students' interest in learning. These include the use of work in groups and pairs, and exercises in which the whole class can take part. Teachers encourage open discussion and debate. Marking is of a good quality and helpful feedback is given to students. Some teachers do not always manage to sustain students' interest; this results in low levels of achievement by students who are inattentive.

113. All GCE AS/A-level courses have comprehensive and well-structured schemes of work. Teachers plan their lessons with care and make aims and objectives clear to students. They clearly present key concepts in lessons, often with the effective use of up-to-date secondary sources, such as summary handouts and visual aids. Teachers encourage high levels of student participation. Students' awareness of underlying ethical and cultural issues is raised by group discussion. Students are encouraged to contribute their ideas freely and to think critically. Teachers give helpful individual guidance and encouragement. They set homework regularly and return it promptly. Their marking includes detailed and constructive feedback on students' performance. In some lessons, teachers talked for too long or set too few learning tasks, leaving students with little to do.

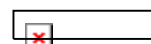
114. Access teachers promote lively discussions. Appropriate attention is paid to ethical issues. The knowledge and experience of adult students are drawn upon skilfully to develop their confidence and assist their learning. Teachers are successful in conveying their knowledge to the students. The techniques adopted include brief teacher presentations, extensive question and answer sessions, detailed discussion in small groups and group presentations to the whole class. Handouts are of a good quality. Short video extracts are skilfully integrated into lessons. A few teachers waste time on over-lengthy explanations.

115. There is an adequate supply of equipment and materials to support the work in the curriculum area. Most classrooms are appropriately furnished and well equipped with overhead projectors, screens, blinds and whiteboards. The provision for IT equipment is generally good. The library is well kept and adequately stocked. There is a good range of relevant, up-to-date journals. Teachers are well qualified for the subjects they teach.

Leadership and management

116. Course management and administration are effective. Teachers' roles and responsibilities are clearly assigned and understood. Communications within the curriculum area are good. Teachers meet regularly. Course files are comprehensive. Students' progress and achievement are closely monitored. There are effective arrangements to ensure that all staff follow quality assurance and assessment procedures. Course reviews, self-assessment and classroom observation all contribute to the identification of individual staff development needs. Course planning takes particular account of the college's mission to widen participation and of the needs of students for whom English is not their first language.

English, languages and communications



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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- good retention rates and value added
- experienced and skilled team of staff

- strong support for individual students
- responsiveness to the needs of the community
- effective monitoring of progress and detailed feedback to students.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance in some classes
- insufficient sharing of good practice.

Scope of provision

117. The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. The provision includes pre-GCSE English; RSA and LOCN modern foreign languages at levels 1 and 2; GCSE English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish; GCE AS/A-level English language and literature, and French; GCE AS-level German, Italian and Spanish; and the English component of access to HE courses. Students aged 16 to 18 account for the majority of the some 100 enrolments at level 3; of the 200 students studying at levels 1 and 2, two thirds are aged 19 or over.

Achievement and standards

118. Retention rates are high. The majority of students make good progress. Many GCE AS/A-level students who enter the college have a lower achievement at GCSE than the national average. Value added calculations indicate that a good proportion of students achieve better grades than predicted. Many GCSE students are repeating subjects that they initially studied at school; for some individuals, a low pass grade represents a significant improvement on previous performance. An improvement was made in 2001 in the pass rates for GCE A-level English and French, and GCSE English. Results for Spanish were poor in 2001.

119. Most students studying English demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of their subject. The quality of students' oral work is generally good. GCE AS/A-level students contribute well to classroom discussions, and successfully develop their ideas and arguments, support them with reference to texts and other evidence, and test assumptions. Access students make perceptive contributions to group discussions, express well their ideas on literary themes and present arguments clearly. Some students produce written work of a very good quality for the level of programme. Many students develop good note-taking skills. However, the quality of some students' written work is undermined by spelling errors and poor grammar.

120. Many students are making good progress in language skills. Some beginners have made outstanding progress in acquiring a new language in a brief period of time. Many students are acquiring authentic accents in the foreign languages they are learning. Most students above beginners' level have good comprehension of the spoken language, though some students have

poor knowledge of grammar. Much of the written work of students shows good linguistic ability and good standards of presentation. For some students, poor language and communication skills limit their rate of progress and affect the quality of their coursework and assignments.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English, languages and communications, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE Spanish	2	No. of starts	23	26	27
		% retention	61	88	93
		% pass rate	57	57	24
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	257	200	193
		% retention	63	87	88
		% pass rate	78	55	76
GCSE English literature	2	No. of starts	19	15	18
		% retention	37	80	78
		% pass rate	57	50	86
GCE A-level English language and literature (1 year)	3	No. of starts	20	38	23
		% retention	95	92	91
		% pass rate	58	52	52
GCE A-level English language and literature (2 years)	3	No. of starts	17	39	34
		% retention	88	49	85
		% pass rate	57	68	80
GCE A-level French	3	No. of starts	34	18	10
		% retention	65	89	90
		% pass rate	41	38	44

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001).

Quality of education and training

121. The college has modified its provision in response to identified local needs. Courses are available on the main college sites during the day and in the evening, and also in the satellite centres in the local community. Students who cannot attend college can study for GCSE qualifications at home through distance learning. Modern foreign languages provision has been re-organised to increase opportunities for part-time adult students. These changes have helped to maintain an appropriate range of languages. Direct access to HE is provided through the access courses.

122. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Schemes of work in English are well constructed. Teachers make good use of well-designed handouts. The logical development of different learning activities ensures a high quality of concentration and achievement in class. Teachers have built up a shared methodology that focuses on developing the individual students' critical thinking. In the best lessons, lively discussion among the students deepens their understanding of key issues, while teachers make supportive and challenging interventions. Students' work is marked promptly, thoroughly and consistently to the standards agreed by subject teams. Teachers monitor students' learning carefully, offering support and encouragement for individuals and groups. In a few classes, teachers were content with only brief responses from some students.

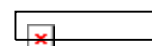
123. Modern languages' lessons are taught by fluent linguists or native speakers. Students are actively encouraged to use the language they are learning in most lessons. Teachers give students good insights into the culture of the country whose language is being studied. Students' oral and listening skills are developed through role-play, work in pairs and groups, and teachers' effective use of questioning techniques. Teachers use a variety of well-prepared teaching materials, including videos and audiocassettes. Students are well supported by teachers. Their work is carefully assessed and their progress monitored through regular reports. In some lessons, teachers have difficulty in meeting the needs of students of widely varying abilities and motivation.

124. Teachers have appropriate subject and teaching qualifications. Most foreign language teachers are native speakers of the language they teach. Classrooms on the main sites are well furnished, and students have access to a good range of listening and viewing equipment. Teachers have developed good paper-based learning materials, some of which are available on the intranet. The restrictions on space, poor acoustics, and the small amount of equipment available, limits the range of teaching and learning activities that can be deployed at the satellite sites.

Leadership and management

125. Courses are administered effectively and efficiently. A detailed process of course review takes account of students' views and local demands and has resulted in a number of changes and improvements to the provision. There are comprehensive course files and well-produced handbooks. Course teams meet regularly and pay close attention to matters such as the improvement of standards and the monitoring of attendance. Teachers constantly review students' progress, both formally and informally. Observation of each other's lessons helps teachers to establish consistent standards in their teaching. However, there is limited dissemination of good practice between part-time teachers in some subject teams.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and basic skills



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

Strengths

- good teaching
- students' achievements in ESOL
- effective initial assessment in ESOL
- good individual support for students.

Weaknesses

- curriculum not fully matched with student needs
- lack of individual negotiated action plans with clear learning goals
- little use of IT in lessons.

Scope of provision

126. The college offers full-time and part-time courses at many levels. Courses are mostly designed for adults. Provision is based on the main sites and in the community-based satellite centres. Currently, 205 full-time and 400 part-time adult students are undertaking ESOL courses leading to Pitmans and LOCN qualifications. There are 23 full-time students aged 16 to 18 undertaking LOCN basic skills units in communication, numeracy and IT, and 202 part-time adult students are working towards wordpower and numberpower qualifications. The college has a successful partnership with a local school which hosts the ESOL provision for students aged 16 to 18.

Achievement and standards

127. Data supplied by the college relating to basic skills students' achievements contain some inconsistencies. The data were insufficiently reliable to allow the production of a summary table of students' achievements. Students' assessment records demonstrate satisfactory levels of achievement. Retention rates for basic skills courses are high. Inspectors observed that the standard of students' work is generally satisfactory. Most students' portfolios are well organised. Progress is clearly evident in their written work. Students become more proficient in reading and writing. The majority of students gain in confidence and self-esteem during their time at the college, and develop skills of working independently. Their oral work is of a satisfactory standard.

128. Data on ESOL students' achievements supplied by the college were insufficiently detailed to allow the production of a summary of students' achievements. There are high rates of retention on ESOL courses. College records demonstrate some good levels of achievement. The success rates for students who take the Pitmans examinations are good. The pass rate has improved over the last three years. Students gain confidence during their programmes and develop new skills in speaking, understanding, reading and writing English. Students work well together and are confident in answering questions and completing the work set. They make good progress in developing their language ability, display good levels of speaking skills, and develop correct pronunciation and intonation. The majority of students work hard to practice, consolidate and extend the language learnt in the classroom. Many students complete homework to consolidate what they have covered in class. They improve their language skills by taking books home to read on their own. The standard of students' written work is generally good. Most students compile a well-organised record of their work in English. Many students gain accreditation for the first time and value this highly.

Quality of education and training

129. The college provides courses in the evening and in the daytime in a wide range of community settings. The satellite centres are well known in the borough and easily accessible to potential students. This has resulted in the participation of adult students who are either entering education for the first time, or returning after many years.

130. Much of the teaching is good. ESOL students receive an effective initial assessment of their language skills. Lessons are carefully planned to build on students' existing language skills and increase their confidence. Teachers maintain students' interest and motivation by using a variety of

appropriate teaching methods. Homework is set to reinforce the work covered in lessons. Students receive strong personal support from their teachers who create an atmosphere of mutual respect. The learning materials used recognise students' cultural backgrounds and experience and incorporate them into their learning. Some teachers fail to provide enough opportunities for students to practice speaking. There is little use of IT. Although the aspirations of many students are to gain employment, there is little careers input in the narrow accreditation-based curriculum. Students have too few opportunities to progress. Some students study for too long at the same level.

131. In the best basic skills lessons, teachers organise stimulating learning activities which take account of students' individual learning needs. Teachers relate the teaching of literacy and numeracy to students' lives and interests. Students are given much good individual attention. Teachers provide good individual teaching and give clear instructions. Students' learning is regularly checked. In the weaker lessons, students follow undemanding activities. IT is not used as an integral part of learning. The recording of progression in basic skills is mainly of activities covered rather than of the progress students have made in developing the skills identified in their initial assessment. Students do not have individually negotiated learning plans, with clear short-term and long-term targets. Progression routes are not clearly mapped.

132. The college-based accommodation is satisfactory, and some of it is good. The main base room is well equipped with computers and good learning materials. In the satellite sites, students have access to adequate learning materials but their use of IT is constrained by the small number of computers. Some teaching rooms are cramped and do not provide an effective setting for learning. A high proportion of classes are taught by part-time teachers, some of whom have little teaching experience and few qualifications.

Leadership and management

133. The provision is managed within the department of widening participation. The course teams for full-time ESOL, part-time ESOL and basic skills manage their own areas independently. Hence, there is no co-ordinated approach to the management of the various components of basic skills and ESOL work across the college; little sharing of good practice; and the quality of the provision is not monitored effectively. The lack of reliable data on students' achievements limits the extent to which staff can set appropriate targets and monitor and improve performance. Part-time teachers have not been observed teaching as part of the quality assurance process.

Part D: College data

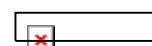
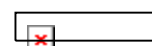


Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	17.8	37.4
2	43.6	23.5
3	32.9	16.6
4/5	0.3	2.4
Other	5.4	20.1

Total	100	100
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Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science and maths	781	2,287	27.0
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	2	82	0.7
Business administration and management	53	224	2.4
Information and communications technology (ICT)	80	360	3.9
Sports, leisure and travel	90	551	5.7
Health and social care	134	456	5.2
Visual and performing arts and media	140	1,151	11.4
Humanities	135	441	5.1
English, languages and communications	605	1,110	15.1
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and basic skills	224	2,442	23.5
Total	2,244	9,104	100

Source: Provided by the college in autumn 2001.

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
1		16-18			19+		
		1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
	Starters excluding transfers	*	174	196	*	1,489	1,097
	Retention rate (%)	*	82	97	*	67	88
	National average (%)	77	75	76	76	73	76
	Pass rate (%)	*	37	37	*	37	43
	National average (%)	48	59	64	55	58	66

2	Starters excluding transfers	*	944	699	*	1,411	1,765
	Retention rate (%)	*	66	85	*	72	89
	National average (%)	75	72	73	76	74	74
	Pass rate (%)	*	48	50	*	46	42
	National average (%)	57	65	69	57	63	66
3	Starters excluding transfers	*	318	494	*	1,448	1,863
	Retention rate (%)	*	89	62	*	73	84
	National average (%)	77	73	75	76	75	76
	Pass rate (%)	*	48	55	*	45	38
	National average (%)	59	65	66	59	63	67
4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	13	8	*	141	193
	Retention rate (%)	*	69	88	*	77	86
	National average (%)	*	*	*	81	78	75
	Pass rate (%)	*	44	86	*	30	17
	National average (%)	*	*	*	51	56	55

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 and sixth form colleges).

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, The Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

2. College rates for 1997/98 - 1998/99: Benchmarking Data (1997/98) to (1999/2000): Retention and Achievement Rates, produced by the Further Education Funding Council, September 2000.

3. College rates for (1999/2000): provided by the College in spring 2001.

** data not available*

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)	56	32	12	66
Level 2 (intermediate)	65	25	10	69
Level 1 (foundation)	50	36	14	28

Other sessions	76	12	12	25
Totals	61	27	12	188

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