



# City of Westminster College

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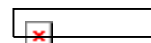
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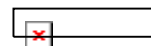
**Basic information about the college**



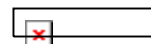
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Name of college:	City of Westminster College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Paul Bellamy
Address of college:	25 Paddington Green London W2 1NB
Telephone number:	020 77238826
Fax number:	020 72582902
Chair of governors:	Jude Boardman
Unique reference number:	130423
Name of reporting inspector:	Penny Silvester HMI
Dates of inspection:	28 January-01 February 2002

## Part A: Summary



### Information about the college

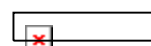


The City of Westminster College was established in 1903 and is the main provider of post-16 education and training in the Borough of Westminster. The college has five sites located in Paddington, Maida Vale and Queens Park. It operates in a culturally diverse area. Three quarters of 16-18 year old students are from areas classified as economically deprived and half of all the students enrolling at the college are from minority ethnic groups. Many do not have English as their first language. There are large numbers of homeless people and asylum seekers within the borough. The average General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) point score of students aged 16 to 18 on entry to the college is significantly lower than that of students completing Year 11 in the Westminster schools. Approximately 45% of full-time students enrolling at the college receive additional learning support.

In 2000/01, the college recruited 8,157 students of which 27% were aged 16 to 18, mostly on full-time courses and 73% were aged 19 or over, mostly on part-time courses. The participation by qualification level for 16-18 year old students in 2000/01 was 15% at level 1, 36% at level 2, 35% at level 3 and 14% on other courses. The equivalent figures for adult students were 18% at level 1, 17% at level 2, 23% at level 3, 5% at level 4 and 37% on other courses.

There is extensive provision for groups that are under-represented in further education (FE). The college's mission is to "provide the best education and training opportunities, enabling learners from all backgrounds to achieve their personal and professional goals and, in so doing, contribute to local and national development and prosperity".

### How effective is the college?



Education and training are good on courses in building services and on those for students with learning disabilities and/or difficulties, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Provision is unsatisfactory in engineering, humanities and basic skills. It is satisfactory in the other six areas inspected. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

#### **Key strengths**

- improved retention rates on many courses in the last year
- good pass rates on courses for adult students
- effective promotion of equality of opportunity

- good teaching on programmes for adults
- wide range of courses which meet the needs of the local community
- good financial management
- effective use of partnerships and community links
- good learning support for students.

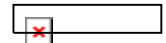
***What should be improved***

- low pass rates on courses for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 2 and 3
- large proportion of unsatisfactory teaching on courses for 16-18 year olds
- failure of quality assurance procedures to drive up standards for 16-18 year olds
- poor management of work-based training
- poor co-ordination of some activities across the college
- poor attendance and punctuality amongst students
- some poor tutorials

- delays in students receiving learning and language support
- access for students with mobility difficulties.

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

### Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

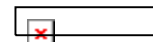


*The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum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

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Much of the teaching is good or better, especially on courses for adults. There are good pass rates on the GCSE science programme and on daytime adult courses, but poor pass rates on GCSE mathematics and two-year General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level) courses. The college offers many science and mathematics courses including some specialist courses in medical technology.
Building services	<b>Good.</b> There is much good teaching. Pass rates are high on most courses. Students produce practical work of a high standard. There is a particularly high progression rate from craft courses to higher education (HE). In a few lessons, insufficient attention is paid to health and safety.
Engineering	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Much of the teaching is less than satisfactory. Pass rates are good on specialist courses in sound engineering, but are poor on general engineering and motor vehicle courses. Retention rates on most courses are good or satisfactory. Assessment practice is poor. Tutorials are ineffective and poorly attended.
Business studies	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Strategies to improve retention rates have been successful. Pass rates are high on some courses for adults, but are low on some courses for 16-18 year olds. There is good provision for students for whom English is an additional language and for students who are under-represented in FE.
Information technology and computing	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Retention and pass rates on the access to computing and the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) intermediate information technology (IT) courses are good. They are unsatisfactory on full-time advanced level courses for 16-18 year olds. There is a wide range of provision and effective management of vocational courses. Some lessons are inadequately prepared.

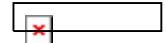
Health and social care	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Teaching is well planned and builds on the prior experiences of students. Pass rates are good on access to nursing and GNVQ intermediate courses, but are poor on GNVQ advanced courses. There are poor and declining retention rates on GNVQ foundation and intermediate.
Visual and performing arts	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The college has a broad range of arts courses. Teaching is satisfactory. Pass rates are high on many art and design courses but are low on GCE A-level theatre and national certificate in music technology courses. Specialist accommodation is very good.
Humanities	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Pass rates are low, and most students do not fulfil their potential. Most of the teaching in humanities is competent. Attendance at lessons is poor, and most students do insufficient work outside lessons. Strategies for monitoring and improving students' performance are inadequate.
English and communications	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Pass rates are good on GCE A-level and GCSE English literature courses and on the GCSE communication studies course. They are poor on GCE A-level communication studies and GCSE English language courses. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Students are well supported in their studies, and their course work is marked carefully and constructively.
English for speakers of other languages	<b>Good.</b> There is a broad range of courses which enables students to progress. Teaching is good. Students are well motivated. Most pass rates are at or above national averages. College-wide co-ordination of ESOL learning support is unsatisfactory. Initial assessments and individual learning plans are not used effectively.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is good. Clear learning goals are set. Students' progress is carefully monitored. There is effective development of students' personal skills. Teachers have close links with external agencies. The range of accredited courses is narrow.
Basic skills	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> The management of the basic skills provision is inadequate. Much of the teaching is less than satisfactory. Insufficient attention is paid to individual learning needs. There are too few staff with appropriate qualifications. There is effective collaboration with other agencies.

### How well is the college led and managed?



Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior managers and governors work well together. There are established quality assurance procedures, but they are not having much impact on raising standards for 16-18 year olds. The college has successfully reversed a decline in retention rates, but has not succeeded in improving pass rates for 16-18 year olds at levels 2 and 3. Financial management is good. The college's strategy for widening participation is succeeding and equality of opportunity is effectively promoted. The college makes good use of partnerships and community links. Centrally-held management information is accurate, but has not been used effectively to drive up standards. Curriculum management is satisfactory overall, but there are inconsistent practices and standards between college sites. There is insufficient cross-college co-ordination in basic skills, business studies, ESOL support, IT and GCE A-level provision. The management of work-based learning is poor.

## To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

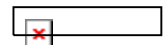


The college has a strong commitment to equal opportunities. Many courses provided in the college and in the community have been designed to increase participation among groups commonly under-represented in FE. The college has successfully introduced vocational courses in business and health and social care that include language support for students for whom English is not their first language. The college has reached out into the community to teach basic skills in hostels and day centres in central London to help the homeless.

Strategies to increase participation from groups under-represented in FE have been successful. About half of all students at the college, and almost 70% of 16-18 year olds, are from minority ethnic groups. This is well above the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in the borough. In the last four years, the college has increased its participation rates for younger students by 40%, for women by 31% and for those living in 'widening participation areas' by 17%.

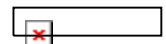
Equality of opportunity is well promoted through all college activities. Teaching divisions set equal opportunity targets. Recruitment, pass rates and retention rates are regularly analysed according to gender, ethnicity and disability. Students report high levels of satisfaction with the way they are treated. Access to buildings on two of the college sites is difficult for students with restricted mobility.

## How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Students are generally well supported on their courses. There is effective pre-course advice and guidance for potential students. The quality of tutorials is variable. There is good welfare advice and access to financial support. Careers education is effective but there is low take-up of careers interviews. All students are given an initial assessment to determine their support needs. Learning support is effective, especially for students with dyslexia. However, there is a lack of co-ordination of basic skills and ESOL support across the college, which results in delays for some students in receiving the support they need.

## 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***

- friendly and supportive atmosphere
- helpful and supportive teachers

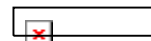
- good pre-course guidance and advice
- wide choice of appropriate courses
- good financial assistance and support
- effective language and dyslexia support
- good learning resource centres.

***What they feel could be improved***

- lack of recreational and social areas
- low number of enrichment activities
- limited choice and high cost of food in canteens
- teaching of key skills
- poor quality of some classrooms
- overcrowding in the library at Maida Vale at peak times.

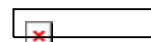
**Other information**



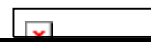


The college has two months to prepare an action plan in response to the report. It must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors must agree the plan and send copies of it to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the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

## Part B: The college as a whole



### Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

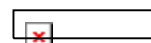


Aspect & learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3)%	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4)%	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7)%
Teaching 16-18	47	35	18
19+ and WBL*	70	24	6
Learning 16-18	38	40	22
19+ and WBL*	69	25	6

*Key: Inspectors grade three aspects of lessons: teaching, learning and attainment. 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 college provides a broad range of vocational courses, together with courses leading to GCE A levels, access to HE and GCSE. In three of the areas of learning inspected, there is a small amount of work-based learning. The college also offers a number of courses that are designed to meet specific ESOL needs of groups of learners. For many students, the college offers a second chance to achieve qualifications not gained at school. The college is successful in ensuring that students acquire personal and developmental skills in addition to accredited qualifications. Many courses aim to increase students' self-esteem and confidence. The college recruits a high number of students from disadvantaged areas and in judging its performance, inspectors took this into account and compared it with colleges of a similar type. The average GCSE score of students entering the college is well below the national average.

2. The data on students' achievements for the years 1998 to 2000 show that pass rates have improved on most courses at all levels for adult learners and are now above national averages. Pass rates are below the national averages for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 2 and 3. Pass rates in 2001 for 16 to 18 year olds declined at all levels, but improved slightly for adult learners.

Retention rates for all learners on level 1 and level 2 programmes declined between 1998 and 2000. The college has introduced strategies to improve retention rates and figures for 2001 indicate that retention rates for all learners, at all levels, have improved.

### **16-18 year olds**

3. The college has been successful in raising the previously low levels of retention and pass rates at level 1 in the last year. For example, the pass rate at level 1 has risen from 34% in 1998 to 64% in 2000, which is the same as the national average. Provisional figures for 2001 suggest this pass rate has been maintained. Pass rates on GNVQ foundation courses have improved from 50% in 1998 to 67% in the last year, which is just above the national average. Pass rates are still, however, poor on GNVQ courses at foundation level in engineering and business.

4. On level 2 programmes, the overall pass rate improved from 46% in 1998 to 71% in 2000, but dropped to 59% in 2001. Poor performance in key skills at level 2 accounts for some of this decline. Pass rates on GCSEs are low, with only 35% of students gaining grade A\*-C, compared with an average for Westminster Local Education Authority (LEA) of 39%. Poor pass rates on GCSE English language and mathematics courses make a large contribution to the poor overall pass rates. GCSEs in science subjects, English literature and communications have very good pass rates. The pass rate on GNVQ intermediate programmes was 68% in 2001 which is above the national average. Retention rates over the same period declined to below the national average. However, in 2001, retention rates improved to above the national average.

5. For learners on level 3 programmes, pass rates improved from 41% in 1998 to 56% in 2001. This is still 10 percentage points below the national average. Retention rates over the same period have been slightly below the national average. Pass rates in GCE A-level subjects for students aged 16 to 18 are poor. In 2000/01, the average points score for students taking two or more GCE A levels was 7.2. This was substantially below the Westminster LEA average of 12.1 and the national average of 17.8 points. The pass rate on GNVQ advanced courses was 64% in 2001 which is below the national average. There were some good results in GNVQ advanced art and design, and pass rates on GNVQ advanced IT, were in line with national averages. The pass rates on national diploma courses are good.

6. Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have made good progress with personal development and the development of independent learning skills. There is appropriate initial assessment and students make good progress against individual learning plans. The rate of progression to other courses is high. Achievements at entry level are good on courses for people who have English as a second language.

7. Pass rates on advanced modern apprenticeships over the last three years have been poor: of the 92 apprentices who started training over the last three years, only 27 have achieved the qualification. Pass and retention rates on work-based training programmes at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 are high on programmes in graphics and photography, but very low on sport and recreation and art and design programmes. At NVQ level 3, pass and retention rates are high in leisure and tourism, but very low in media.

### **Adult learners**

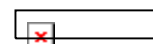
8. Unlike 16-18 year old learners, adults achieved well at all levels in 2000. Pass rates were in the top quartile for FE colleges of a similar type, and indications are that the college will maintain these standards in 2001. On courses of over 24 weeks duration, of the 1,712 adults completing in 2000, 73% were successful. Retention rates among adults have improved and in 2001 were at or above the national averages. The number of adult learners studying on HE programmes dropped from 327 to 182 between 1998 and 2000.

9. On NVQ level 1 programmes, the college pass and retention rates are similar to the national averages for similar colleges: for example, in 2001, overall pass and retention rates were 80% and 83% respectively. On NVQ level 2 programmes, pass rates remained at around 85% between 1998

and 2000, but dropped to 76% in 2001. Retention rates improved over the same period from 62% to 75%. On NVQ level 3 programmes, pass rates improved from 59% in 1998 to 78% in 2001. Retention rates declined from 91% in 1998 to 69% in 2000, but data for 2001 indicate an improved rate of 91%.

10. Attendance in the lessons observed during the inspection was 70%, which is below the national average. Attendance was good in construction and sciences and mathematics, but poor in engineering, English and communications, ESOL and humanities.

### Quality of education and training



11. Teaching is good on adult courses but is less than satisfactory on courses for students aged 16 to 18. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 254 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 58% of lessons, satisfactory in 30% and less than satisfactory in 12%. Teaching on courses for adults was much better than that on courses for 16-18 year olds. Only 6% of lessons attended by adult students were less than satisfactory, compared with 18% of lessons for younger students. Teaching at entry level and level 2 was better than teaching on level 1 and level 3 courses. Punctuality was poor in some lessons.

12. The majority of lessons are well planned and prepared. Teachers focus on the requirements of awarding bodies. They use their industrial experience to provide examples of current practice to illustrate theoretical concepts. In GCE A-level and GCSE lessons, there are good handouts and well-structured work sheets. Practical lessons are generally well taught. In many lessons, teachers provide good practical demonstrations. Technical staff provide good support in practical lessons and workshops. Many teachers make effective use of audio-visual equipment. In IT lessons, they make good use of current technology to support learning. However, there is insufficient use of IT to enhance learning in any of the other curriculum areas, except ESOL.

13. The college provides good support to students who have English as a second language. There are specialist courses leading to vocational qualifications specifically for students who have language support needs. Team teaching involving vocational and ESOL teachers is effective.

14. The pace of some lessons is too slow. Teachers use inappropriate teaching methods and make too few checks on students' learning. There is an over-reliance on open questions addressed to the whole group. Only a few students responded and the understanding of the rest is not tested. More able students are not stretched. The skills of analysis and evaluation are insufficiently well developed.

15. The learning needs of some students are not met. Too much of the teaching is directed at the whole class and different learning materials are rarely produced to cater for the range of abilities in the group. Individual learning plans are used well on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. On ESOL courses, individual learning plans have been devised but they are not used.

16. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and have relevant vocational expertise. Most have a recognised teaching qualification. Teachers on NVQ courses have appropriate assessor awards. The college has had difficulties in recruiting appropriate teachers, particularly in building services, business studies and IT. The college uses an external agency to provide emergency short-term teaching cover, but agency staff have also been employed to cover a few long-term absences in business studies. They have not received an induction into the college. One agency staff member does not have previous experience in the subject areas being taught and this has adversely affected the learning of some students. There are insufficient qualified and experienced basic skills teachers. Professional development for teachers is good. All staff employed at the college, including hourly paid staff, are offered development opportunities and the take-up is good. All staff

development activities are thoroughly monitored and recorded.

17. The college has well-developed plans to improve its accommodation and learning resources. The implementation of these plans is effectively managed. Students and staff value the safe and welcoming environment and the unobtrusive security arrangements. Most classrooms are pleasant and spacious and are equipped with appropriate teaching resources. There are excellent specialist facilities for performing arts. Many of the classrooms in IT and business are too small. In one engineering workshop and many of the construction classrooms, ventilation is poor and adversely affects students' concentration. There is some under-utilisation of space.

18. Over the last two years, the college has invested heavily in up-to-date IT equipment. This is having a beneficial effect on teaching and learning in a few areas, such as ESOL and IT and computing. However, in business studies, some computer software is below professional standards, which makes it difficult for students to produce work to the required standard. There are good learning resource centres at Paddington, Queens Park and Maida Vale. IT and other learning resources are good, but at times of high demand, they are all in use and some students are unable to get access to the resources they need. There are appropriate library facilities at Paddington, Maida Vale, Queens Park and Cosway Street.

19. Access for students with mobility difficulties is poor at the Maida Vale and Queens Park sites. Some 32% of the college accommodation is inaccessible to learners with restricted mobility. Social areas for students are inadequate. There are small social areas at the three largest sites, but these do not meet the needs of the students. There are no dedicated prayer rooms at four of the five sites.

20. Assessment is generally well managed. There are well-established procedures for the moderation and internal verification of assessments in many curriculum areas. These procedures are being consolidated and extended to include the assessment of key skills. Oral feedback to students on assessed work is generally helpful. The marking and annotation of assessed work by teachers assists students in most curriculum areas to improve their work. There were examples of inadequate assessment and feedback in a minority of curriculum areas.

21. Work-based training and assessment are badly planned and inadequately monitored. Most employers are not aware of the relevant NVQ standards. There is an insufficient number of people to monitor the work-based learning and assessment properly. Most work-based assessment is carried out badly. Many assessment opportunities are missed. Employers carry out the assessment of trainee gas fitters, but there is no internal verification by college staff. Trainees are not given regular progress reviews and they are not aware of the progress they are making towards the NVQ requirements.

22. During induction, students undergo an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. This is used to confirm their suitability for their chosen course, and to identify any need for support in basic skills. However, when a need for additional help is identified, it is not always provided promptly. The college has recognised this weakness and is taking action to improve procedures.

23. The progress of students on some courses is monitored regularly by their tutors, using information provided by subject teachers. This good practice is not followed on all courses. The setting of personal targets for students is not well developed and the action plans produced by students are often inadequate. For example, they often do not show what steps students need to take to improve their performance.

24. The college provides a wide range of learning programmes which meets most local needs. These include vocational courses and GCSE and GCE A levels in 48 subjects. Market research is used well to inform curriculum planning. In most curriculum areas, there is a broad range of courses from foundation through to advanced level. An increasing number of learners progress from foundation through to advanced level and on to HE. The college provides learners with a variety of attendance arrangements according to their personal circumstances and individual needs. The college has recently widened its range of courses at foundation level, but in some curriculum areas, such as art and design and English, there are still few courses at this level. In most curriculum

areas, there are insufficient work-based training programmes.

25. The college is committed to widening participation. External funding, effective marketing and collaboration with voluntary organisations have helped to increase the number of adults and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds enrolling onto a range of innovative projects. Over the last three years the college has introduced a range of community-based courses and increased its pre-entry and foundation level programmes in most areas of the curriculum. Enrolments on ESOL and related courses have increased from 770 to 1,500 since the last inspection.

26. The cross-college enrichment programme is not effectively co-ordinated. No clear audit of what enrichment activities are being offered has taken place to identify gaps in the provision. There are arrangements to accredit the prior attainment and achievements of employed business and customer service learners, but there are no such arrangements for learners across the college as a whole.

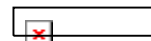
27. Prospective students are given impartial information and advice about college courses. College staff visit local schools and careers events. Guidance is provided in community locations and in college on open days. The college is part of a new consortium for 16-19 year old students which will start in September 2002. Local school students will receive a brochure outlining all provision within the consortium.

28. Students are generally well supported on their courses. All full-time and part-time students are allocated a personal tutor. Some of the tutorials observed by inspectors were ineffective. The college is seeking to improve the quality and consistency of tutorials through a development project. Advice is readily available to students on welfare matters. Students receive effective careers education as part of their courses, and can also get careers advice through the local careers guidance company. However, attendance by students at careers interviews is low. There is a counselling service and the college has good links with local agencies which can provide specialist support. Financial help is provided from access funds and charities, and advice is available on the Education Maintenance Allowance. About 35 students are given help with the cost of childcare; this is a low number for an inner city college. A system for monitoring and following-up poor attendance has been introduced recently and has had some beneficial effects, although there were examples of poor attendance during the inspection. The arrangements for developing and accrediting students' key skills have been amended in the current year, following poor achievements in 2001.

29. One of the college's strategic objectives is to provide appropriate support for all its students, many of whom need help with language and basic skills. This objective is being partially achieved. There is much effective learning support for students, and there are good retention and pass rates for students receiving support. However, the current arrangements for identifying students' support needs are not fully effective, and some students experience considerable delays in receiving help. The support provided includes work with individuals in language, literacy and numeracy and the use of support staff to assist students in lessons. The support for dyslexic students is particularly effective. Many students are speakers of other languages who need help to improve their English. Whilst much effective language support is provided, the language needs of some students are not being met. The college does not have a clear overview of the language needs of all its students or of the full range of support currently being provided. Students with disabilities are well supported. There is inadequate learning support for trainees in the workplace.

30. The college has recognised the need to improve the co-ordination of its support arrangements. A recently developed action plan has provided a coherent strategy for consolidating and improving provision. Despite an increase in staffing, learner support services are not able to meet the needs of all students through individual sessions with specialist staff. The college is seeking to address this by improving the awareness of all staff of how they can help students.

## **Leadership and management**



31. The leadership and management of the college are satisfactory. Senior managers and governors work well together. Staff are well supported and the college provides a welcoming atmosphere for learning. There are appropriate arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity. The college has developed good links with the local community and makes effective use of collaborative programmes for widening participation in education. Examples include collaboration with eight secondary schools, joint working with the Adult Education Service, and community-based initiatives to promote employment and regeneration. The proportion of students from areas identified as 'widening participation areas' increased by 17% over a four-year period, with the largest increase being in the number of students aged 16 to 18.

32. The college has implemented a number of developments to raise standards including the establishment of a new post at vice-principal level with responsibility for student and client services. During the twelve months prior to the inspection, attendance support workers were appointed, teaching mentors were introduced, the support provided for individual students was improved and quality assurance procedures were strengthened. College data for 2000/01 indicate that these actions are having an impact on retention rates. The decline in retention rates has been halved and overall rates are now at, or above, the national averages for colleges of a similar type. There are still some poor retention rates in some curriculum areas. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at levels 2 and 3 declined in 2001 and are below national averages for colleges of a similar type. Students who are 19 or over make up 50% of enrolments. Overall pass rates for this group of students have improved at all levels and are now at or above national averages for colleges of a similar type.

33. The management of most curriculum areas is satisfactory. Provision in construction and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed. ESOL courses are well managed, but the co-ordination and management of ESOL support is unsatisfactory. There are indications of improvements in standards in computing and IT following more rigorous implementation of quality assurance procedures. In science and mathematics, self-assessment has led to improvements in some, but not all courses, and action planning at course level is weak. There are inconsistent practices in business studies between the different college sites and there is insufficient sharing of good practice. The day-to-day management of health and social care is satisfactory but insufficient attention is paid to development and quality improvement. Teachers in art, design and performing arts are actively involved in self-assessment, but they do not monitor the outcomes of their action plans sufficiently. In humanities, managers have been slow to remedy weaknesses and quality assurance procedures are not having sufficient impact on raising standards. Engineering provision is fragmented and lacks firm leadership. Course leaders are unaware of the performance of their own courses against national averages. There is insufficient cross-college co-ordination and development of provision in the areas of basic skills, business studies, IT and GCE A levels. The co-ordination and management of work-based training is poor. Support is provided at the college, but not at the workplace, and trainees are rarely visited. Quality assurance arrangements do not extend to the workplace.

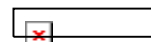
34. Centrally-held management information is reliable but teachers cannot easily make use of it. Following a recent revision of course evaluation procedures, all course teams are provided with data on retention and pass rates. There is much effective learning support, but information on the performance and attendance of individual students is not held electronically, and is not sufficiently accessible to course and personal tutors. Although the college has identified this weakness, it has been slow in developing systems to improve matters.

35. The college has well-established quality assurance procedures but they are not leading to improvements in all curriculum areas. Lesson observations are carried out and the findings contribute to staff appraisal, self-assessment and staff development. Despite this, there has been no overall improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Inspectors found teaching in 58% of lessons to be good or better and in 12% to be less than satisfactory. Courses are evaluated annually. Targets are set for retention and pass rates and actions are planned to bring about improvements. The evaluation procedures do not pay sufficient attention to improving teaching. On GCE A-level programmes, students' grades are compared with predictions based on their qualifications on entry to the courses. There are no such arrangements on other courses for

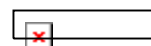
determining added value. The college has identified this weakness. Heads of schools monitor course evaluation, but the rigour with which procedures are implemented and actions for improvement are planned and executed varies. The college's self-assessment report is lengthy and did not identify significant weaknesses in three curriculum areas. Action plans resulting from course evaluation and self-assessment do not provide a sufficiently clear agenda for improvement. The college has recently introduced teaching mentors to help raise teaching standards, but there is still insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching across the college.

36. The governors are appropriately involved in setting the strategic direction of the college and are well supported by the clerk. The financial position of the college is sound. Financial management is effective, enrolment targets are met and the college has established significant reserves. Student numbers have increased by 23% over a four-year period. Budget holders in curriculum areas are allocated budgets on the basis of student numbers and although there are some small classes, heads of schools and divisions are careful to ensure that expenditure does not exceed allocations. Governors are well informed about the performance of the college and receive regular reports on the implementation of the strategic plan. They were appropriately involved in developing the plan, which was completed the year prior to inspection. Although the overall strategic objectives of the college are clear, the actions that managers and teachers need to take to raise standards are not spelled out in sufficient detail.

### Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



#### Science and mathematics



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

#### **Strengths**

- well-organised GCSE science programme leading to good results
- high pass rates on daytime courses for adults
- good teaching on programmes for adults
- specialist medical courses that meet the needs of employers
- good rates of progression from intermediate to advanced level courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- very low pass rates on GCE A-level courses for 16-18 year olds
- poor pass rates on GCSE mathematics courses
- insufficient challenge for more able students
- insufficient use of IT during lessons
- poor punctuality at lessons by many younger students.

### ***Scope of provision***

37. The college provides a very broad range of science and mathematics courses at intermediate and advanced level for over 1,000 students. There are GCSE and GCE A-level courses in biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. Students can take a one-year course of GCE A-level subjects either full-time or part-time during the day. There are vocational courses in science at intermediate and advanced level and an access to HE course in life sciences. A special feature of the college's provision is the medical technology courses for adults in employment, including NVQs in audiology and neurophysiology, which recruit students from all over the country. Courses are offered at the Maida Vale and Cosway Street sites. There are few evening courses in the sciences.

### ***Achievement and standards***

38. There are good pass rates on GCSE courses and daytime courses for adults. The group of students taking a package of GCSE sciences and mathematics have achieved pass rates well above national averages in biology, chemistry and physics, and many progress to advanced level courses. There are good pass rates on adult daytime courses. For example, 93% of students who started on the access to life science course passed, and of those, 93% went on to university. The pass rates on the day-release first certificate in science and national certificate courses in science were over 90% in 2001. There was a significant improvement in the pass rate on GNVQ intermediate science in 2001 to slightly over the national average. Many students progress from intermediate to advanced level courses within the college. Pass rates on two-year GCE A-level courses have been poor for several years. In 2001, retention rates on the new GCE AS science and mathematics courses showed some improvement over previous retention rates on the first year of a two-year course, but pass rates were below 50%. Pass rates on national diploma in science courses are poor. There are poor results in GCSE mathematics. Retention rates are poor on GCE A-levels and the national diploma in science. They are satisfactory on most of the vocational courses.

39. The standard of students' written work and other assignments is satisfactory. 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 good recording and analytical skills. In mathematics, some students miss out essential steps in their problem solving. Punctuality at lessons for many younger students is poor and this affects their learning and the learning of others in the class. Attendance was good at 79%.

***A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
First certificate science	2	No. of starts	15	37	23
		% retention	100	78	83
		% pass rate	67	96	95
GCSE chemistry	2	No. of starts	28	19	25
		% retention	89	74	96
		% pass rate	52	57	67
National diploma science	3	No. of starts	27	15	*
		% retention	78	47	*
		% pass rate	76	86	*
Access to HE life sciences	3	No. of starts	**	15	15
		% retention	**	80	94
		% pass rate	**	92	93
GCE A-level biology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	19	19	21
		% retention	100	95	57
		% pass rate	32	56	83
GCE A-level mathematics (2 years)	3	No. of starts	44	45	30
		% retention	80	62	67
		% pass rate	37	42	42

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

\* data not yet available

\*\* course not running

***Quality of education and training***

40. Most teaching is good or better. It is particularly good on courses for adults. Teachers use their extensive knowledge and vocational experience to present interesting and clear explanations of scientific and mathematical concepts. They often use illustrations and demonstrations that students can relate to. In a biology lesson, a microscope was connected to a television monitor to show the cross-section of capillaries in the kidney. Students' interest was stimulated when they used a clinical flicker fusion frequency meter on themselves to determine how electrical impulses reach the brain from the eye.

41. Teachers' planning documents focus on content and timing, rather than on learning approaches and skills acquisition. In a few lessons, teachers made insufficient checks on whether the students understood what they were doing. They did not provide tasks to cater for the wide range of students' abilities. More able students are not sufficiently challenged. The slowest person in the group often determined the pace of the lesson. In mathematics, there is little variety in the teaching and learning activities experienced by students. Sometimes students become bored and learn little. There is insufficient use of IT to support learning in both science and mathematics. For example, in a

mathematics lesson, the teacher explained the characteristics of exponential and logarithmic functions using hand drawn diagrams on the whiteboard, which the students took time to copy down. Students were not able to investigate different functions themselves, using graphic calculators or graph-drawing software, because there were no IT facilities in the classroom.

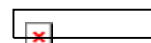
42. Homework is set regularly and is marked carefully. Assignments on vocational courses are designed to develop the competences students need in order to obtain their qualifications. Students understand what they need to do to get good marks. Students receive detailed feedback on assignments and coursework, which they find helpful and which shows them how they can improve their performance. Students receive good personal support from their tutors. The college has recently introduced the use of target grades to help motivate students. The action plans that students negotiate with tutors after assessment reviews are often too vague to allow students' progress to be monitored.

43. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Students are able to use a suitable range of specialist equipment in their practical work. Specialist equipment that might be too expensive for the college to buy is sometimes made available by inviting manufacturers to give demonstrations. Skilled science technicians provide effective support for laboratory work. Improvements to biology and chemistry laboratories at Maida Vale have made them more appropriate for group activities. Teaching rooms have a strong subject identity that helps students to focus on their work. There are insufficient IT facilities in classrooms and laboratories.

### ***Leadership and management***

44. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school of science and the school of medical technology liaise effectively. Course teams are mutually supportive and communications are effective. Action plans arising from self-assessment contain clear strategies for improvement. There are some signs of improvement in retention rates on GCE A-level courses in science. Value added measures are not used widely to analyse students' performance. The recent work of the staff mentor in carrying out lesson observations and encouraging the sharing of good practice is leading to improvements in teaching.

### **Building services**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good teaching
- high pass and retention rates
- high standard of students' practical work
- excellent accommodation for gas training

- high attendance rates
- unusually high progression rate from craft courses to HE.

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient attention to health and safety
- poor ventilation in some classrooms
- some inappropriate management of assessment.

**Scope of provision**

45. The college offers a narrow range of full-time and part-time courses in electrical installation, gas and building service engineering. Programmes are available at intermediate and advanced level. Attendance patterns include day, evening-only, block release and short courses. There are currently 12 students aged 16 to 18 and 10 adults on full-time programmes. Of the 222 part-time students, 84% are over 19. There is a small number of advanced modern apprentices on gas-fitting programmes.

**Achievement and standards**

46. Pass rates in building services are high and are well above national averages. For example, the pass rate on the City and Guilds course in electrical installation is 20 percentage points above the national average. Retention rates are satisfactory, and in some cases, very good. Attendance is good, averaging 79%.

47. The standard of work in lessons and in students' files is high. Students work with confidence and demonstrate good analytical skills, dealing with complex tasks in a competent manner. Practical tasks reflect current industrial practice and standards. Students on electrical installation courses work with confidence when wiring up and testing a range of electrical equipment. They have a thorough understanding of the test equipment and are competent in its use. They are able to identify faults in electrical circuits, rectify them, test and commission circuits. Gas fitters work on complex gas control systems in a realistic work environment. They understand the codes of practice associated with the design of central heating systems. They demonstrate good practical skills, such as bending of copper pipe to complex shapes. Building services students use up-to-date computer-aided design software to produce complex drawings and assignments of a high standard.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in building services, 1999 to 2001**

Qualification	Level	Completion	1999	2000	2001
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		year:			
City and Guilds part 1 electrical installation	1	No. of starts	94	87	97
		% retention	78	79	77
		% pass rate	90	71	84
City and Guilds part 2 electrical installation	2	No. of starts	37	60	62
		% retention	81	83	85
		% pass rate	60	50	58
City and Guilds gas service installation and maintenance	3	No. of starts	12	18	17
		% retention	83	72	41
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National certificate building service engineering	3	No. of starts	40	48	32
		% retention	97	71	84
		% pass rate	95	97	89

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

### **Quality of education and training**

48. Teaching is good in most practical and theory lessons. Teachers produce comprehensive schemes of work, which effectively link the teaching of theory to practical. The learning environment is a realistic simulation of an industry setting and teachers relate the content of their lessons to current industrial practice. In many lessons, good use is made of students' industrial experience to illustrate key points and to promote discussion of the kinds of problems that may be encountered in the workplace. Lessons are lively and students contribute readily. Teachers check students' understanding regularly, making good use of directed questioning. More able students help other students. Learning support materials developed by teachers are of a high standard and help consolidate learning. Teachers make effective use of video to promote discussion and develop students' understanding of complex concepts. For example, video was well used to consider the environmental issues linked to the generation of electricity.

49. Most practical lessons are well planned and include information for students about the standards to be achieved during the lesson. Students are clear about the work that they need to complete and how to record it. In one practical demonstration, the teacher did not follow correct health and safety procedures. In two practical sessions, students did not wear appropriate safety footwear.

50. Teachers are well qualified and have up-to-date industrial knowledge. There are good specialist resources. The accommodation for gas training is of a particularly high commercial standard. Several classrooms are stuffy and hot, making it difficult for students to concentrate.

51. Assessment is not always well planned. In one lesson, all the students completed a practical task at the same time and had to wait in turn for the teacher to check their work before being able to proceed. There is inadequate monitoring of the assessment of modern apprentices in the workplace. Assessment is carried out by the employers, but no one from the college visits to verify the quality of this assessment. When the assessments are complete, the associated documents are sent to the college for inclusion to the apprentices' portfolios. The teaching and assessment arrangements for key skills have not yet been developed.

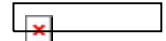
52. There is a very good rate of progression by craft students through to HE courses. A bridging course enables students to gain a level 3 qualification and progress to a higher national certificate course. Since 1997, 55 students have benefited from this progression route. Teaching staff have a close and focussed relationship with students and monitor their progress closely. The college's

initial assessment arrangements are used to assess the potential of applicants and appropriate learning support is given to those who require it.

### ***Leadership and management***

53. The building services courses are well managed. There are clear lines of communication. Senior managers set achievement and retention targets based on national benchmarks. There is a good understanding of these targets at team level. There have been problems in recruiting staff to teach and manage gas-fitting courses. Each course team prepares a self-assessment report and these contribute to the departmental self-assessment report. The learning area has been successful in generating income by running full-cost programmes. This has helped to improve resources. For example, a contract with London Underground for safety training has helped to finance a dedicated room containing a full-size escalator.

### **Engineering**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good retention rates on sound engineering and motor vehicle courses
- high pass rates on sound engineering courses
- good rate of progression into employment in the sound and theatre industry.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- poor pass rates on the first diploma in engineering and motor vehicle courses
- poor assessment practice and inadequate feedback to students
- unsatisfactory standards of work completed by students

- poor attendance and punctuality on some programmes.

### **Scope of provision**

54. The college provides a broad range of engineering courses from level 1 to level 3 at the Paddington Green site. The full-time provision includes specialist courses in sound engineering, media and lighting, alongside general engineering qualifications. The sound engineering courses have been developed in recent years and now enrol around 700 students. The number of students taking general engineering courses has declined. The college has strong connections with local theatres which provide employment opportunities for students. Ten apprentices are on a work-based learning programme specifically designed for theatre electricians and they attend the college one day each week. Apprentices are employed by theatre lighting companies in Slough and London.

### **Achievement and standards**

55. Pass rates are poor on general engineering courses. Those on GNVQ foundation and first diploma in engineering courses are well below national averages. Pass rates on motor vehicle engineering courses are extremely poor with only around 15% of students achieving their qualifications this year. Pass rates on the City and Guilds entertainment and theatre electrics course have improved in the last three years, and are now above the national average. Retention rates are good on sound engineering and motor vehicle courses.

56. The standard of most students' work is unsatisfactory and their progress is slow. Students on the first year national diploma programme find some mathematical concepts difficult to grasp and 81% of them have been referred in at least one mathematics assignment. Attendance rates are poor at 65%. Students are late for some lessons. Lateness is not sufficiently challenged by teachers and leads to disruption of students' learning. There is good progression from foundation GNVQ onto national diploma programmes and on into HE.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering, 1999 to 2001**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
First diploma in engineering	2	No. of starts	23	25	18
		% retention	71	68	78
		% pass rate	40	79	50
GNVQ foundation engineering	2	No. of starts	19	10	18
		% retention	59	80	59
		% pass rate	50	63	50
City and Guilds part 1 entertainment and theatre electrics	2	No. of starts	54	39	51
		% retention	100	79	87
		% pass rate	47	66	74
City and Guilds motor vehicle repair and service	2	No. of starts	43	24	16
		% retention	83	67	94
		% pass rate	14	13	13
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	58	42	29

engineering	% retention	51	39	46
	% pass rate	42	63	82

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

### **Quality of education and training**

57. There is much unsatisfactory teaching. Some 30% of the lessons were less than satisfactory. Most were poorly planned. Some teaching methods are inappropriate for the subject being taught. Students waste time copying notes and complicated technical diagrams from the whiteboard. There is insufficient use of practical teaching aids, such as examples of tools or models. In a motor vehicle lesson, the teacher gave a formal presentation about electricity and the motor vehicle. The teacher used the whiteboard to explain electrical terms. No checks were made to see if students understood the topic. Students copied notes from the board into their notebooks. Some students became bored and started to talk amongst themselves. Most tutors ask too many open questions that do not adequately test individual learning. During small-group work, the brightest students often dominate the group. Tutors failed to bring the quieter students into discussions and debates. In many lessons, the learning needs of individual students are not met. The more able students are not stretched by the work, while others struggle to cope. In a few lessons, teachers make the topics more relevant by linking the tasks undertaken to the students' experiences in the workplace, or their own practical experiences. Practical examples are used to reinforce learning. A minority of lessons make use of excellent workbooks or task sheets, which allow students to progress at their own pace and offer structured exercises which stretch all learners.

58. Most teachers are adequately qualified but the full-time general engineering staff have had little industrial updating or secondments to industry. Some recent attempts have been made through the internal lesson observation programme to identify and share good practice. Many theory lessons occur in inappropriate accommodation. Several classrooms are cold and shabby. Some are effected by obtrusive noise from adjacent teaching areas. The equipment and facilities are adequate. Managers and staff in engineering have been successful in using income to improve resources. A new technology centre has been established with up-to-date facilities. The main motor vehicle workshop is congested with vehicles and an adjacent practical work area is cramped. Electronics laboratories have insufficient basic equipment. There are good specialist resources in sound engineering.

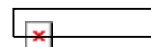
59. Students' attendance at tutorials is poor and declining. Students are able to get informal support from course tutors if required. Basic skills support in engineering is ineffective. There is little transfer of information about students' support needs between tutors. Some lessons are double staffed, but this does not always result in students getting the help they need.

60. In some subjects, no formal assessment has taken place this year. Written feedback on students' work does not provide clear guidance on how to improve. Homework is often handed back late. Students make slow progress towards the completion of their qualifications. Key skills are not effectively taught. There is little consideration of any prior learning or experience that adult students may have had. There are no regular monitoring visits to modern apprentices' employers' premises. Action planning is ineffective. Internal verification is satisfactory.

### **Leadership and management**

61. Engineering courses are the responsibility of four different schools. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate. Self-assessment reports have been produced for each school, but these offer a fragmented picture of engineering and there is some inconsistency in the judgements. They overstate strengths and fail to recognise significant weaknesses in teaching and learning. Senior managers set targets for retention and pass rates based on national benchmarks, but these are not always understood or acted upon by course teams. Course leaders are unaware of the performance of their own courses against national benchmarks and do not fully appreciate the significance of benchmarks in the target-setting process.

## **Business studies**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates on NVQ administration, legal secretaries and national certificate courses
- good use of up-to-date business examples in lessons
- successful strategies to improve retention rates
- good range of courses meeting the needs of the local community.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor pass rates on GNVQ foundation and advanced, and GCE A-level courses
- failure to stretch students in many lessons
- high staff turnover which adversely affects learning for many students
- outdated software for use by students on administration courses.

### ***Scope of provision***

62. The college provides a wide range of business courses, which meets the needs of the local community. Provision for business is located at three college sites: Maida Vale, Cosway Street and Queens Park. There are 539 students aged 16 to 18 and 729 students who are 19 or over, 62% of whom are studying on a part-time basis. The Maida Vale Centre concentrates on full-time courses for 16-18 year olds, including GNVQ intermediate business, Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) business, and GCE A-level business studies. The Cosway Street Business Centre offers a range of professional courses, including accounting and marketing courses. The



Queens Park Centre offers business courses designed specifically for students for whom English is an additional language. Business students take a wide range of short courses in IT, in addition to their main course of study.

### **Achievement and standards**

63. Pass rates have been above the national average for the last three years for NVQ administration at levels 1 and 2. Pass rates for the Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) secretarial certificate are also good and have remained at or above the national average for the last three years. The pass rate on the national certificate in business and finance has been at or above the national average for the last three years, with all students passing this year. The pass rates on the GCE A level in business studies has been consistently well below the national average for the last three years, and was only 41% in 2001 compared with a national average of 78%. Pass rates are also poor on the GNVQ advanced courses. GNVQ foundation business pass rates have declined from above average in 1999/2000, to well below the national average in 2000/01.

64. Strategies to improve retention rates have been successful. Retention rates have improved significantly on GNVQ business courses and are now up to national averages. Retention rates on the GNVQ foundation course have improved and are well above the national average. On the GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses, the retention rates have improved and are now close to the national average.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in business studies, 1999 to 2001**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GNVQ foundation business	1	No. of starts	66	29	35
		% retention	55	61	85
		% pass rate	52	71	55
ILEX legal secretaries certificate	2	No. of starts	40	48	30
		% retention	82	71	69
		% pass rate	91	87	91
GNVQ intermediate business	2	No. of starts	66	63	78
		% retention	58	70	78
		% pass rate	62	61	66
NVQ accounting	2	No. of starts	23	24	21
		% retention	78	63	71
		% pass rate	61	73	64
GNVQ advanced business	3	No. of starts	92	101	70
		% retention	44	65	66
		% pass rate	48	80	65
GCE A-level business studies	3	No. of starts	43	56	79
		% retention	77	48	78
		% pass rate	29	60	41

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

65. Many students on the business programmes designed for ESOL students make significant progress in terms of personal, social and academic skills, without necessarily achieving the full

qualifications. The standards achieved by students on business courses are satisfactory. NVQ level 2 administration students display good IT skills. Students on the NVQ level 2 course in IT use spreadsheets effectively. Students on the legal secretaries course demonstrate a thorough understanding of the law relating to health and safety. Some students on access to business studies courses were not able to input basic data tables onto a computer. Attendance levels in lessons were satisfactory overall, but there were some lessons where attendance rates were below 60%.

66. The business courses make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of the diverse, local community. There is a good rate of progression to other courses. Two students from Kosovo, for example, have been offered university places, having arrived in this country three years ago with no recognised qualifications.

### ***Quality of education and training***

67. In 62% of the lessons observed, teaching was good or better. In such lessons, teachers draw on their own commercial experience and use up-to-date business examples. In an AVCE lesson on human resource management, the teacher drew out the learning points about recruitment and promotion from a well-structured case study based on work in a well-known supermarket. The case study enabled students to apply the theory they had learned to current practice. The teacher skilfully used examples, such as the current train strike, to illustrate theoretical components of the lesson. In IT-based lessons, individual students' needs were effectively met by encouraging them to work on tasks at different levels. However, in a significant proportion of lessons, students are not encouraged to work on their own and the tasks given to students do not provide opportunities for them to develop their analytical skills or their learning skills.

68. High staff turnover has adversely affected the learning of many students. The college is increasingly dependent on agency staff and this results in a lack of continuity in students' pastoral and academic support. While access to IT facilities is good, the software used by students on administration courses is insufficiently up to date and is not compatible with that used by part-time students at work.

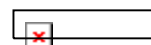
69. Teachers' feedback to students on assignments is constructive and work is returned promptly. The workload for students is evenly distributed throughout the course. While the monitoring of students' progress is good on administration and secretarial courses, this is not the case on the GCE A-level business courses.

70. The majority of students speak highly of the support provided by teachers and are enjoying their courses. However, there is insufficient co-ordination between subject teachers and those providing learning support. The quality of tutorial provision varies from course to course, with some outstanding practice and some poor practice.

### ***Leadership and management***

71. The management of business courses is fragmented. There is inconsistent practice in terms of the target setting, monitoring and evaluation of courses and in the implementation of whole college policies and procedures. Staff understand their job roles and responsibilities and work effectively in teams on each site. However, there is little sharing of good practice between business studies staff on different sites, even though some are teaching the same courses. The wide range of courses and the extensive ESOL support gives students from disadvantaged backgrounds access to business courses and hence widens participation in education.

### **Information technology and computing**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate IT and access courses
- good pass rate on the City and Guilds advanced diploma course
- effective use of up-to-date teaching resources in many lessons
- wide range of provision
- effective management of vocational ICT courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- poor retention and pass rates on advanced level courses for 16 to 18 year olds
- low attendance in many lessons
- some inadequately prepared lessons
- inadequate written feedback to students on marked work.

### ***Scope of provision***

72. The college offers a wide range of ICT courses for both 16-18 year old and adult students at its Paddington Green site. The number of students recruited to computing courses has risen continuously over recent years to 1,796 in 2001. Full-time courses include those leading to GNVQ foundation and intermediate, AVCE full and single awards, City and Guilds certificate, diploma and advanced diplomas and an access course. At the Maida Vale site, the college provides GCE A-level courses in ICT and has introduced the AVCE single award from September 2001. Student numbers on the first year GCE A-level ICT course rose from 31 in 1999/2000, to 150 in 2000/01. The City and Guilds advanced diploma programme is designed mainly for adult students, and includes a

course specifically for students for whom English is not the first language. There are part-time courses at levels 1 to 3 in a range of subjects including computer applications, graphics, programming and web design. An extensive portfolio of part-time courses in ICT is offered to meet the needs of specific employers.

### **Achievement and standards**

73. Pass rates on the City and Guilds advanced diploma course are good. On GCE A-level computing and GCE AS IT courses, pass rates are low. They were particularly low on the new GCE AS in ICT at 41%. Retention and pass rates on most courses have improved over the last three years. Retention and pass rates on the GNVQ intermediate IT and the access to computing courses are above average. Retention rates on full-time GCE A-level and AVCE programmes for students aged 16 to 18 are low.

### **A sample of retention and pass rates in information technology and computing, 1999 to 2001**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GNVQ intermediate IT	2	No. of starts	46	43	40
		% retention	63	65	98
		% pass rate	55	61	82
GNVQ advanced IT/AVCE	3	No. of starts	79	48	50
		% retention	54	58	58
		% pass rate	56	90	72
GCE A-level computing	3	No. of starts	34	31	45
		% retention	71	71	73
		% pass rate	30	24	47
Access to computing	3	No. of starts	21	17	15
		% retention	57	53	80
		% pass rate	83	89	100
City and Guilds advanced diploma IT	3	No. of starts	23	22	19
		% retention	78	77	79
		% pass rate	56	71	100

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

74. Students on the City and Guilds advanced diploma in IT demonstrate good practical skills and are able to produce spreadsheets and design web pages. AVCE students are able to apply the rules of number conversion. Many students on the GCE AS IT course have poor IT skills: over half need help to access the Internet. GNVQ foundation students show little understanding of database concepts. The standard of work in students' portfolios is satisfactory, but the majority of students' files are disorganised and the standard of note taking is generally poor. During the inspection, attendance at many lessons was low and the average attendance was unsatisfactory at 70%.

### **Quality of education and training**

75. The teaching in 57% of the lessons observed during the inspection was good or better. Some lessons were very well planned and prepared. The range of learning activities was appropriate and the lecturers made good use of the technology available. In one lesson, the teacher used slides to demonstrate new topics to a group of adult students. The demonstration was linked to a set of

practical exercises designed to take into account the wide range of abilities within the group. The students tackled the tasks enthusiastically and produced spreadsheets of a high standard. Some 13% of the teaching was unsatisfactory. These lessons were inadequately planned and prepared. They included inappropriate teaching and learning activities, such as lengthy lectures on practical subjects and students working individually through exercise books for extended periods. In one GNVQ foundation lesson, the teacher struggled to keep control of the large group of students. Many were confused by an explanation of databases. Some sought individual clarification until they understood the topic. These students completed the task, but the others gave up and chatted amongst themselves.

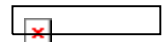
76. Teachers are suitably qualified and the majority have undertaken recent staff development. There is an extensive network of up-to-date computers and adequate provision of software. There is an adequate number of competent IT technical support staff at the Paddington Green site, but the arrangements for cover during staff absences are inadequate, resulting in some computers and printers not being in use during the inspection. Some IT classrooms are bright, spacious and well furnished, while others have insufficient workspace. Many of the chairs in IT rooms do not have adjustable heights or backrests. Many of the classrooms have projectors and large screens that some lecturers used to good effect for presentations and demonstrations. The use of these resources was integrated effectively into lessons. The learning resource centres enable students to work on their own outside of lessons.

77. The schools of technology and IT use initial diagnostic assessment and individual advice sessions to guide students' choice of course. Tracking and monitoring of full-time students' progress is carried out through regular tutorials. Students on GCE AS ICT courses are given individual targets for achievement. Some lecturers provide thorough and constructive written feedback to students on their assessed work, but on a significant amount of the work inspected, the quality and amount of feedback was inadequate.

### ***Leadership and management***

78. The management of vocational ICT courses at Paddington Green is effective. Managers have an up-to-date knowledge of curriculum developments. Staff meet regularly and work well as a team. Quality assurance arrangements are effective. Equality of access and opportunity are emphasised during the effective advice and guidance processes, which ensure that students are placed on the most appropriate course. There is no co-ordination of the management of IT provision across the two college sites and there is insufficient sharing of good practice.

### **Health and social care**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates on the GNVQ course at intermediate level and the access to nursing course
  
- well-planned teaching which builds on the prior experiences of students

- effective links between theory and practice in NVQ early years courses.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on the GNVQ at advanced level
- poor and declining retention rates on GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate levels
- insufficient development of students' analytical skills on AVCE courses
- insufficient attention paid to some students' poor language skills.

### ***Scope of provision***

79. At the Queens Park site, the college provides a full-time GNVQ course in health and social care at foundation and intermediate levels and a one or two-year AVCE course. There are 62 students aged 16 to 18 on these courses, and students who have the appropriate skills and knowledge are able to progress from level 1 to level 3. NVQ levels 2 and 3 in early years care and education courses are provided for 47 adult students. The college also provides one course at NVQ level 2 in early years care and education for students who have English as a second language. The college successfully introduced an access to HE course for 36 students in 2000 at the Maida Vale site.

### ***Achievement and standards***

80. The pass rate on the GNVQ foundation level has improved significantly in 2001 and is now in line with the national average. At intermediate level, pass rates have been consistently well above national averages for the last three years. Pass rates at advanced level have remained well below the national average. Pass rates on the access to nursing course are excellent at 94%. Pass rates on the diploma in nursery nursing course were low and this led to its replacement by the NVQ in early years care and education. Pass rates on the NVQ have improved and are now at the national average. Retention rates are poor and declining on GNVQ courses at foundation and intermediate levels and are similar to national averages at advanced level. Retention rates are well above the national average on access to nursing courses.

81. Satisfactory standards were achieved in the majority of lessons observed. On level 1 and level 2 courses, students acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding to meet the course requirements. However, at advanced level, students had insufficient theoretical knowledge. Students' presentations were unstructured and not well argued. Their oral and written language lacked fluency and clarity and they did not use appropriate terminology. Students had not developed the skills of analysis and evaluation to the level required.

### ***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	15	11
		% retention	75	67	58
		% pass rate	56	40	73
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	26	24	20
		% retention	58	79	62
		% pass rate	93	95	85
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	23	32	14
		% retention	52	66	61
		% pass rate	60	57	57
Access to nursing	3	No. of starts	*	*	19
		% retention	*	*	84
		% pass rate	*	*	94

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

\* course not running

### **Quality of education and training**

82. The proportion of good or very good lessons was satisfactory. In the most successful lessons, students built on previous knowledge to extend their understanding of theoretical concepts and practical issues. In a GNVQ foundation lesson, the teacher used students' existing knowledge of the connection between obesity and heart disease to establish links between diet, exercise and health. Students were able to draw up an exercise plan for different client groups. In an AVCE lesson, the teacher successfully used students' local knowledge to introduce a lesson dealing with environmental issues. Learning objectives are clear and generally met. Schemes of work are detailed and include assessment procedures and deadlines. Lessons are carefully planned in general and teachers make appropriate links between theory and professional practice. In a NVQ level 2 lesson, students assessed the educational value of musical instruments they had made from a variety of plastic containers. They successfully identified how the musical instruments could be used to develop language and cognitive skills in children. They also discussed how the activities might affect emotional and social development. Students then drew up an action plan to carry out the activities at their pre-school placements.

83. In some lessons, the teachers' explanations to students were not clear and time was not used effectively. Teachers use well-produced handouts in most lessons, but while these meet the demands of the course, they do not sufficiently meet the needs of students with poor language skills. On the GNVQ course at foundation level, 52% of the students did not have English as their first language and 17% have been diagnosed as having dyslexia. Similarly, 41% of the students on the intermediate level course have English as an additional language. Poor language skills prevent many students from expressing clearly what they know and understand, particularly in writing. Lesson planning does not take sufficient account of these factors. In some lessons, quiet students are not drawn into discussions sufficiently and their work is not adequately monitored.

84. Teachers are well qualified and have relevant professional experience. Resources to support learning in NVQ early years care and education are good. There are dedicated classrooms with appropriate equipment for childcare and health and social care. Students cannot always gain access to computers when they require them and the library stock of specialist books is inadequate.

85. Internal verification and moderation are effective. Teachers work as a team to ensure that assignments are assessed against the appropriate criteria. There are good professional

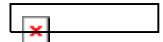
relationships between college staff and placement providers.

86. There is a comprehensive tutorial programme which includes careers education and pastoral support. Monitoring of students' progress is effective. However, communication between subject teachers and those providing additional support is poor. Additional learning support is available, but student up-take is not monitored and, therefore, personal tutors and subject teachers cannot assess the effectiveness of the support.

### ***Leadership and management***

87. The overall management of health and social care is satisfactory. There are effective procedures to ensure appropriate assessment and moderation. Some individual courses are not well managed and there is very little sharing of good practice between course teams. Lesson observation is not identifying weaknesses in teaching effectively and quality assurance systems are not leading to improvements. Insufficient use is made of value added data to monitor students' progress.

### **Visual and performing arts**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- broad range of appropriate courses at levels 2 and 3
- high pass rates on the GNVQ course in art and design at advanced level and national diplomas in design and music technology
- effective development of independent learning skills on advanced level programmes
- relevant work experience and related activities
- very good accommodation, equipment and technical support in most subjects.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates on courses leading to GCE A-level theatre and dramatic arts and national certificate in music technology



- poor retention rates on some courses
- some students' weak study skills
- inadequate monitoring of students' progress
- poor attendance on many courses.

### ***Scope of provision***

88. The college offers a broad range of full-time and part-time courses in visual and performing arts. These include level 2 and level 3 courses in fine art, design, graphic design, performing arts, technical theatre, media, photography and music technology. Programmes include GCE A levels, first and national certificates and diplomas, work-based NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in photography, GNVQ at intermediate level, AVCE and City and Guilds certificates. Most programmes take place during the day, but some part-time courses are taught in the evening. There are currently 216 students aged 16 to 18 and 180 adults on full-time programmes; 39 16-18 year olds and 278 adults on part-time programmes; and nine 16-18 year olds and three adults on work-based programmes.

### ***Achievement and standards***

89. Pass rates are well above national averages on the GNVQ course in art and design at advanced level, national diplomas in design (photography) and music technology and the first diploma in performing arts. They are significantly below national averages on the GNVQ course in art and design at intermediate level, the GCE A-level theatre and dramatic arts course and the national certificate course in music technology. Retention rates are poor on a number of courses. In 2001, a third or more students left before the end of their courses on GCE A-level art, GCE A-level theatre and dramatic arts, GCSE art, national certificate in design, GNVQ intermediate and advanced communications and production, and the national certificate and diploma in music technology. There is poor attendance on many courses. Overall attendance during the inspection was low at 69%. The use of attendance officers has yet to remedy students' lateness and absenteeism.

90. The work produced by students on photography courses is particularly good. In contrast, the work produced on some GCE AS and A-level courses is weak. The lack of development of students' study skills is holding them back on some courses. Many students are poor at note taking and have not learned how to organise their files. In lessons, students frequently take notes on scraps of paper. In practical lessons, performing arts students do not adopt professional practices. They are often inappropriately dressed for practical work and chew gum during speech training.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in visual and performing arts, 1999 to 2001***

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	35	25	28

production		% pass rate	65	33	88
City and Guilds certificate in media techniques: television and video	2	No. of starts	45	59	46
		% retention	89	69	80
		% pass rate	73	47	51
First diploma performing arts	2	No. of starts	22	25	22
		% retention	73	72	68
		% pass rate	60	78	100
GCE A-level communications and media (2 years)	3	No. of starts	23	26	38
		% retention	43	69	68
		% pass rate	40	83	88
GCE A-level art/fine art (2 year)	3	No. of starts	19	16	26
		% retention	47	63	62
		% pass rate	100	70	81
GNVQ advanced art and design	3	No. of starts	34	23	17
		% retention	56	61	76
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma in design (2 years)	3	No. of starts	30	30	29
		% retention	90	87	72
		% pass rate	96	96	100
National diploma in music technology	3	No. of starts	45	25	36
		% retention	69	96	64
		% pass rate	74	71	83

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

### **Quality of education and training**

91. Some 48% of the lessons observed were good or better. Relationships between staff and students are good on most courses. On many advanced vocational courses, teachers encourage students to take some of the responsibility for how and what they learn. For example, second year national certificate photography students devise their own assignments under guidance from staff. Insufficient attention is given to extension activities in some lessons. For example, in music technology, students that had completed an assignment early were offered no suggestions for further development and learning. Low attendance in many lessons has a significant impact on learning. Many students do not attend key skills lessons.

92. Relevant work placements enhance learning on many vocational programmes, such as those in music technology and television and video. Students have had placements with cable television companies. On other courses, students have had photography exhibitions in London and the opportunities to work with professional theatre companies. A student on the national diploma in photography, recently gained national acclaim, winning the Metro bursary, against 1,200 other entrants.

93. Teachers are well qualified and many have relevant industrial experience. Some have difficulties in getting appropriate staff development. Specialist accommodation and equipment are good, particularly in photography and performing arts. The Cockpit Theatre is an excellent facility, but it is under-used and GCE A-level theatre studies students never perform there. Technician support for

practical lessons is good. Some rooms are too small. Students have access to good ICT equipment, but there are sometimes insufficient computers for the number of students in the group. AVCE media students work on appropriate computers when designing their own websites. The excellent book stock in the learning resource centre is under-used.

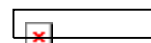
94. Assignments are well designed. Students are given clear instructions on what they need to achieve, including time-scales, outcomes and assessment criteria. Written feedback to students studying photography and performing arts is comprehensive and informative. In music technology and media, little guidance is given on how to improve. Some performing arts students have their work returned late. Internal verification is rigorous and assessment is in line with national standards. Some work-based trainees do not receive regular visits from college staff. Parents of most students aged 16 to 18 are periodically invited to the college for progress reports.

95. Comprehensive pre-course guidance ensures that students are placed on a programme appropriate to their aspirations and abilities. Though students speak highly of the support and guidance they receive from individual tutors, college policies on tutorials and the monitoring of students' progress are not always implemented. Students are assessed before they start their courses. However, little use is made of the findings of these initial assessments, for example, to set targets for students' performance. Advice about careers and progression to HE is supportive and helpful.

### ***Leadership and management***

96. The division of arts has a well-defined management structure. There are, however, ineffective lines of communication between the arts division, the work-based assessment unit and GCE A-level arts course tutors at the Maida Vale centre. This reduces the quality of provision in these areas. Staff carry out rigorous course reviews. The findings contribute to thorough self-assessment reports and action plans within the division. Staff have little appreciation of the strategic direction of the college, and do not feel involved or consulted on key corporate decisions. Management of the Cockpit Theatre is unimaginative and adds only limited value to the learning experience of students on performing arts courses.

### **Humanities**



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

### ***Strengths***

- carefully planned teaching
- good handouts.

### ***Weaknesses***

- low pass rates

- students' poor achievements
- insufficient written work
- insufficient attention to developing students' capacity to study effectively
- inadequate systems for monitoring and improving students' progress
- poor attendance.

### ***Scope of provision***

97. The college provides a wide range of courses in humanities at the Maida Vale site. GCE A-level courses are available in most subjects, and can be taken over one or two years. Over 300 students enrol for these courses each year. Most are aged 16 to 18 attending full-time courses, but the one-year courses are also popular with adults. There is an access course in humanities and social sciences, which attracts approximately 50 adult students a year who wish to prepare for HE. The only GCSE course is in sociology. The inspection focused on courses in history, psychology, sociology and law.

### ***Achievement and standards***

98. Students' achievements in humanities are unsatisfactory. Pass rates are poor. On GCE A-level courses in law, psychology and sociology, and on the access course, pass rates are consistently below national averages. In history, retention and pass rates have improved significantly over the last three years, but pass rates remain below the national average. Most students who enrol for GCE A levels do not have high GCSE scores when they enter the college. Over 40% of students do not achieve as well as might be predicted on the basis of their GCSE performance. The first set of results for the new one-year GCE AS courses is poor, especially in law and sociology.

99. Most students on GCE A-level courses have a basic understanding of their subjects, and have acquired some factual knowledge, but have not developed the critical and evaluative skills required to achieve high grades. Students on the GCSE course in sociology have insufficient understanding of simple sociological ideas.

100. Attendance during the week of the inspection was poor. A third of the students were absent from the lessons observed. Frequently, some of the students present were hindered in their progress because they had missed previous lessons.

### ***A sample of retention and pass rates in humanities, 1999 to 2001***

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
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GCSE social studies	2	No. of starts	28	47	46
		% retention	82	60	74
		% pass rate	30	36	32
GCE A-level psychology (2 years)	3	No. of starts	36	36	48
		% retention	72	56	58
		% pass rate	60	40	57
GCE A-level sociology (1 year)	3	No. of starts	36	43	46
		% retention	83	77	91
		% pass rate	43	64	31
GCE A-level history (2 years)	3	No. of starts	25	26	17
		% retention	56	69	82
		% pass rate	50	56	71
Access to social sciences/humanities	3	No. of starts	48	35	49
		% retention	92	60	65
		% pass rate	46	38	53

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

### **Quality of education and training**

101. Less than half of the lessons observed were good or better. Lessons are carefully planned and their content accurately reflects the requirements of awarding bodies. The students present are usually keen to learn, and some teachers are able to hold their interest. For example, in a psychology lesson, students were helped to understand neurobiological theories of dreaming by applying theories to their own dreams that had been recorded in a diary. In some sociology lessons, students were encouraged to draw on their personal experiences to help them to understand debates about educational achievement and changes in family life.

102. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, and are effective at ensuring that students understand and learn basic factual knowledge. A narrow range of teaching methods is used. Most lessons consist of teachers explaining a topic and occasionally leading with brief question and answer sessions to check understanding and reinforce knowledge. This meets the learning needs of some students, but not others. Some students found it difficult to concentrate on the teacher's explanations for long periods. In one law lesson on statutory interpretation, a combination of unfamiliar language and prolonged explication resulted in students losing interest. In nearly all lessons, students were rarely encouraged to develop their oral contributions beyond brief answers, and as a result, had little opportunity to improve their ability to construct well thought-out arguments.

103. Teachers pay insufficient attention to developing students' capacity to study effectively. Students are not given enough guidance on study techniques, and many students have neither the skills nor the self-discipline to work effectively on their own. The systems for monitoring and improving students' performance are inadequate. Many students fail to submit homework and produce insufficient written work. There is not enough emphasis on the development of the skills of analysis and evaluation. Most homework is marked promptly and accurately, although many of the teachers' comments give inadequate guidance to students on what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. There are no formal arrangements to set targets for students to encourage them to improve.

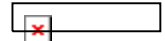
104. The classrooms used for teaching humanities are poor. They have no clear subject identity to stimulate students' interest, and are frequently furnished in a way that discourages group work or whole class discussion. The library stock is adequate. In most subjects, the quality of handouts is

good. Teachers in history, sociology and psychology produce worksheets and other learning materials from a wide range of sources.

### ***Leadership and management***

105. Although managers recognise the need to improve students' punctuality, attendance and achievements, no successful measures to improve these aspects of performance have yet been introduced. The arrangements for monitoring students' progress and helping them to improve their performance are inconsistently applied and insufficiently rigorous. Subject teachers are not clear about what they need to do to improve the quality and amount of work that students do, both inside and outside the classroom. Quality assurance arrangements at course level, including lesson observations, are not sufficiently self-critical. As a result, teachers' own perceptions of the quality of the humanities provision are unrealistic.

### **English and communications**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good pass rates in GCE A-level and GCSE English literature, and in GCSE communication studies
- thorough and constructive marking of students' work
- effective support for students.

#### ***Weaknesses***

- poor retention and pass rates on GCE A-level communication studies courses
- poor pass rate on the GCSE English language course
- slow-paced and uninspiring teaching in many lessons
- some poor attendance and punctuality.

### **Scope of provision**

106. The college provides an appropriate range of English and communications courses at the Maida Vale site. These include GCE A-level courses in English literature, English language and literature and communication studies. GCSE courses in communication studies, English language and English literature are also provided. There are no courses suitable for students who are not yet ready to take GCSE English. Access to literature is offered within the college's humanities and social sciences access to HE programme. All the courses may be studied full time or part time, and most are offered in the evening as well as during the day. Most of the full-time students, apart from those on the access programme, are aged 16 to 18, and the majority of the part-time students are aged over 19. At the time of the inspection there were approximately 400 students enrolled on courses in this curriculum area.

### **Achievement and standards**

107. Retention rates are satisfactory on all courses apart from GCE A-level communication studies, where they are significantly below the national average. Pass rates on GCSE English literature and GCSE communication studies courses are very good. Pass rates are well below national averages on GCE A-level communication studies and GCSE English language courses. On GCE AS courses in communications and English literature, pass rates are low, but they are satisfactory on GCE AS English language and literature courses.

108. Most students' work is at an appropriate standard, although some of the work produced by GCSE students is poor in both content and presentation. There is a good rate of progression from the advanced courses to HE. Overall attendance rates are low at 65%. Attendance in some individual lessons was less than 50%. Many students arrive late for the first lesson of the day. Lateness is not sufficiently challenged by teachers.

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

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
GCSE English literature	2	No. of starts	24	19	20
		% retention	71	63	65
		% pass rate	50	92	85
GCSE English language	2	No. of starts	211	265	207
		% retention	89	69	73
		% pass rate	38	39	40
GCSE communication	2	No. of starts	25	23	47
		% retention	76	74	72
		% pass rate	58	59	73
GCE A-level communication	3	No. of starts	18	24	17
		% retention	61	43	53
		% pass rate	64	40	50
GCE A-level English literature (2 year)	3	No. of starts	23	19	19
		% retention	61	63	72
		% pass rate	100	92	85

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

### **Quality of education and training**

109. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Lessons are carefully planned and prepared. Students are generally set appropriate tasks, which develop their knowledge and understanding. Students are attentive in lessons and have good note-taking skills. They work well on their own, in pairs or in small groups. Teachers make effective use of handouts which cover essential information. Task sheets are carefully designed to ensure that students focus on the most important areas of learning. Lessons usually contain a variety of appropriate activities. In an imaginative and well-managed GCE AS English literature lesson introducing the poetry of Christina Rossetti, the teacher used a combination of whole class questioning and discussion, pair work, playing a recording of a folk song, reading out loud, and handout material which included some well-chosen pictures. The students responded with interest and enjoyment, and demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is not always the case. Many lessons are conducted at too slow a pace. Teachers fail to maintain the students' interest and many students become bored and restless.

110. All teachers are well qualified and experienced. A number have experience as examiners. The resource centre at the college's Maida Vale site has an adequate collection of books, including a good collection of modern fiction to encourage wider reading. The resource centre is too small and becomes overcrowded at peak times. Classroom accommodation is adequate. Insufficient use is made of ICT. There is no policy regarding the word processing of course work, although some of the teachers encourage their students to do so. Teachers regularly organise visits to plays and other relevant events to enrich the students' studies.

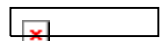
111. There is good support for students. Relationships between teachers and students are good, and students speak highly of the help and support they receive from their subject teachers and personal tutors. Induction programmes are effective in enabling students to settle quickly into the college and their courses. During tutorials, there are regular reviews of students' progress and action plans are agreed. Attendance is monitored closely and students are aware that unexplained absences will be followed up. Learning support is provided for students with dyslexia or other language needs, and weekly subject workshops are provided for those identified as needing extra help. Some GCSE English language lessons have an extra teacher to help the weaker students.

112. Minimum target grades are calculated for students on the basis of their GCSE results, and regular assessments are used to ensure that they are making appropriate progress towards them. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly, and include comments to encourage them and help them improve. Course work is returned promptly, usually at the next lesson.

### **Leadership and management**

113. Management of the English and communications provision is satisfactory. Course team meetings and staff development events are held regularly. There is some informal sharing of good practice between teachers. Targets are set at course level for recruitment, retention and pass rates, and progress towards them is monitored. All teachers are observed in the classroom at least once a year, and the findings contribute to staff appraisals, which take place every two years. However, insufficient attention is paid to improving the quality of teaching. Courses are reviewed annually, action plans are produced, progress is monitored, and some improvements have resulted, for example, in attendance. Self-assessment reports, which are based on the course reviews, clearly identified many of the strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection.

### **English for speakers of other languages**





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

***Strengths***

- good teaching
- good pass rates on most courses
- effective support for individual students through team teaching
- students' enjoyment of their studies
- effective integration of homework into students' programmes
- broad range of courses which enables progression
- effective use of IT.

***Weaknesses***

- ineffective individual learning plans
- unsatisfactory co-ordination of ESOL.

***Scope of provision***

114. Currently, 269 full-time and 405 part-time students are undertaking ESOL courses, which are available in the day and also in the evening. Despite an increase in the number of courses, the college has been unable to respond to the large increase in the number of students who wish to attend ESOL courses. There is a full-time life skills programme for students aged 16 to 18, which enables them to progress to other courses or into employment. Learning support in ESOL is provided in a variety of ways, including contributions to basic skills lessons, support for a small group of students and drop-in workshops.

### **Achievement and standards**

115. Retention and pass rates on ESOL courses are good. They have improved over the past three years. Pass rates on all ESOL courses are above national averages. Retention rates on many courses are also above national averages, although those on courses validated by the Open College Network are slightly below average.

#### **A sample of retention and pass rates in English for speakers of other languages, 1999 to 2001**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Completion year:</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
Elementary (written)	E	No. of starts	57	84	68
		% retention	65	64	96
		% pass rate	85	82	67
Elementary (Open College Network)	E	No. of starts	*	*	34
		% retention	*	*	68
		% pass rate	*	*	93
Elementary (spoken)	E	No. of starts	*	*	20
		% retention	*	*	95
		% pass rate	*	*	93
Pre-intermediate (Open College Network)	1	No. of starts	31	24	22
		% retention	58	75	68
		% pass rate	89	28	93
Upper intermediate (written)	2	No. of starts	*	*	24
		% retention	*	*	88
		% pass rate	*	*	67

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

\* course not running

116. The standard of students' written work is good and most students' portfolios are well organised. Students achieve good grades in their assessed work. Students progress well and become more proficient in speaking, understanding, reading and writing English. The majority of students gain confidence, and their self-esteem is increased during their time at the college. Their oral work is of a particularly high standard. The majority of students work hard to consolidate and extend the learning that takes place in the classroom. Progression from ESOL courses is good. Students progress to higher level ESOL courses, other FE courses, HE and work.

### **Quality of education and training**

117. Teaching is good. Some 86% of ESOL lessons observed were good or better. Most lessons are well planned. They have clear aims and objectives and include a range of appropriate activities to maintain the interest and concentration of students. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed. Students are highly motivated and enjoy their studies. Teachers are encouraging and supportive. There is good use of team teaching to provide additional support for students who need it. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods and resources to consolidate and develop learners' language skills and grammar. In one particularly effective lesson, the teacher used overhead projectors, games, cue cards, and tape recordings to help students practise reading and speaking skills. In another lesson, students were asked to describe 'mystery' objects and identify unusual

sounds. This gave plenty of scope for learning new vocabulary. In a minority of lessons, there was too much reliance on paper-based activities and insufficient attention to the development of listening and oral skills. Learning resources are adapted, when required, for individual students. For instance, handouts are provided in large print for students with visual impairments. IT is used as an integral part of language learning. Students used IT facilities to consolidate their formal language learning with appropriate quizzes on the intranet.

118. ESOL students receive an initial assessment and diagnostic test. Individually negotiated learning plans are still in the early stages of development and are not fully integrated into the learning process. They do not have clear short or long-term targets. They are not adequately linked to the initial assessment and do not consistently form the basis for assessment and planning of further work. Homework is set regularly to reinforce the work completed in lessons. There is a policy dealing with the marking of students' work. Teachers give clear and helpful feedback on written work.

119. There is an effective induction programme, during which students are placed on appropriate courses. Students receive strong personal support from their teachers. The college has introduced measures to improve retention rates. Teachers keep records of latecomers and document the reasons for absence or lack of punctuality. Where ESOL support is provided, it contributes effectively to learners' overall achievements.

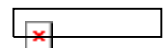
120. Teachers are appropriately qualified. Most of them are part time. This restricts the time available to conduct initial assessments and set individual targets. The accommodation available for such activities is also limited. Some classrooms are overcrowded due to the large group sizes. Resources to teach ESOL are good.

### ***Leadership and management***

121. The ESOL department is well managed. ESOL co-ordinators having clear roles and responsibilities. Teachers work well as a team. They use common methodology, terminology and assessment methods to ensure that standards of work are consistent across the programmes. The quality of course documentation is good. The self-assessment is self-critical and clearly identified the strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection.

122. The co-ordination and management of additional ESOL support is unsatisfactory. There is no clear overview of students' needs throughout the college and the extent to which support is provided to meet these needs. There is insufficient evaluation of the support provided to determine whether it is effective.

### **Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**



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

#### ***Strengths***

- good teaching
  
- clear learning goals

- comprehensive monitoring of students' progress
- effective links with external agencies
- good development of students' personal skills.

### ***Weaknesses***

- inappropriate learning tasks set in a few lessons
- lack of courses leading to vocational qualifications.

### ***Scope of provision***

123. The college provides a small range of discrete courses for students with moderate or severe learning difficulties, and as part of its widening participation programme, it also accepts students with more complex additional learning and support needs. There are 24 adults enrolled on courses for students with severe learning difficulties and 25 students, mostly aged between 16 and 18, on courses for students with moderate learning difficulties. Some students have the opportunity to gain the Edexcel 'Skills for Working Life' award at entry level. Other students can achieve college certificates or certificates from the Open College Network. The college does not offer short vocational courses in subjects such as basic food hygiene, health and safety or introductory IT, which would enhance the employment prospects of students with moderate learning difficulties.

### ***Achievement and standards***

124. Attendance and retention rates are very good. Students make good progress in their personal development. They gain confidence from mixing with other college students. Those who have experienced problems in being with others learn to accept their presence and to work without feeling stressed. Students who were previously reticent and unwilling to participate now have the confidence to contribute their ideas during lessons. In a drama lesson, students demonstrated their warm-up exercises for the rest of the class to follow. They then moved on to miming emotions. They felt justifiably proud of their achievement.

125. Students make good progress in learning how to become more independent. In practical lessons they produced simple healthy meals. They followed the basic rules of hygiene and knew the reasons for doing so. With little prompting they were able to remember that hands were washed in a different sink to that used for washing cooking utensils. Social skills were enhanced when all students sat down together with the staff to eat their lunch. Students held conversations with each other and waited for others to finish talking before making their contribution. Students with severe learning difficulties can tell another person their name and address. Most can also recite their telephone number. Some are able to write these details on a simple form. Students with moderate learning difficulties are learning appropriate office skills. They understand that effective communication is an essential office skill. By carrying out tasks, such as photocopying, they learn

the need for clear instructions and the reason for accuracy.

1.

### ***Quality of education and training***

126. Teaching on courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. In three-quarters of the lessons observed it was good or better. The most effective lessons are carefully planned and have clear aims and objectives. Staff are enthusiastic and have high expectations of their students. The range of tasks they devise for students is sufficiently varied to sustain their interest and to encourage them to take part. Tasks are varied to suit the differing abilities of students in the group. In a literacy session, tasks included reciting personal details, such as name and address, practising writing and completing a simple application form. The more able students in the group were given more complex tasks to complete. In a minority of lessons, teachers had not given sufficient thought to the relevance of the tasks set to the students' long term learning goals. For example, for some less able students, writing the names of other people has little meaning. In a few cases, the tasks set were too difficult for the students to achieve. In the few lessons that were not managed effectively, some students dominated the activities and hindered the progress of others.

127. All staff are appropriately qualified. Most have a teaching qualification or specialist qualification and are experienced in working with students who have learning difficulties. Some are able to use sign language to communicate with students who have hearing impairments. Resources used in lessons are good. The accommodation is adequate. Timetables and worksheets are prepared with pictorial symbols to help students to understand them.

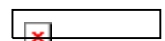
128. The progress of students is tracked well. On entry to the college, students' abilities are carefully assessed with the help of their carers. Individual learning plans are prepared which include appropriate goals. Detailed monitoring of progress towards these goals is done each term, and the goals are amended where necessary. Clear records of progress are kept on each student.

129. All staff have developed a good rapport with their students. Students feel confident enough to discuss with teachers any personal problems that affect their college work. Staff ensure that any additional resources, such as physical learning aids, are obtained for the students. The college environment is welcoming for students with learning difficulties. Effective use is made of community facilities to support students' learning, particularly in relation to the development of their independent living and travelling skills. Teachers have close links with external agencies. An educational group experienced in working with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities visits the college to teach sex education. Local employers provide work experience placements. Staff work closely with managers of local sheltered training projects to provide progression opportunities for students with severe learning difficulties.

### ***Leadership and management***

130. The provision is well managed. There is effective communication between teachers and support staff. Course teams and managers are committed to improving their provision. The self-assessment process is thorough and is undertaken by all course tutors. Nevertheless, the few weaknesses in teaching were not identified in the self-assessment report. There is an appropriate emphasis on staff training and staff are encouraged to attend relevant staff development activities. Managers are aware of national developments in the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Basic skills**



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

### ***Strengths***

- good learning support in language and communication workshops in learning centres
- effective collaboration with external agencies.

### ***Weaknesses***

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient co-ordination of basic skills work across the college
- lack of attention to individual learning needs
- low retention and pass rates on level 1 key skills courses
- insufficient staff with appropriate qualifications.

### ***Scope of provision***

131. The inspection of basic skills reviewed all college provision of literacy and numeracy at level 1 or below. The college's basic skills provision includes: courses in which basic skills tuition is an integral component; cross-college basic skills support (usually provided through language and communication workshops in the learning centres); and designated basic skills lessons within curriculum areas. The college staff also teach basic skills to homeless people in hostels and day centres in central London. In addition, there are key skills lessons in communication and application of number at level 1. The college was unable to provide data on the numbers of students aged 16 to 18 and adult students receiving basic skills support.

### ***Achievement and standards***

132. Retention and pass rates on the City and Guilds numeracy course have improved over the last three years and are now equal to or above the national averages. Retention and pass rates were poor in 2001 on key skills courses at level 1 in communication and application of number. All students produced coursework of an appropriate standard but they were not taught the techniques needed to be successful in external tests. In general, the standards of attainment in lessons and in students' written work were satisfactory.

**A sample of retention and pass rates in basic skills, 1999 to 2001**

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
City and Guilds numeracy (short)	1	No. of starts	45	28	10
		% retention	87	96	80
		% pass rate	62	70	62
City and Guilds numeracy (1 year)	1	No. of starts	141	81	74
		% retention	46	67	68
		% pass rate	37	51	64
Key skills: application of number	1	No. of starts	*	*	175
		% retention	*	*	72
		% pass rate	*	*	53
Key skills: communication	1	No. of starts	*	*	206
		% retention	*	*	76
		% pass rate	*	*	53

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

\* course not running

**Quality of education and training**

133. The teaching observed ranged from very good to very poor. There is good learning support in language and communication workshops in the learning centres. Students are carefully and patiently helped by the teachers and encouraged to think through problems. A good range of teaching strategies is used to help students understand difficult concepts and learning is broken down into manageable steps. Some 30% of lessons observed were less than satisfactory. In these lessons, individual learning plans are not used systematically to guide the planning and teaching. Schemes of work and lesson plans do not specify the intended learning outcomes. Teachers use teaching methods that do not take account of students' different ability levels. They rely too heavily on the use of paper-based learning activities. Students' records do not indicate how much progress they have made towards the goals in their individual learning plans.

134. Insufficient attention is paid to the learning needs of individual students. After an initial assessment, students who need basic skills support are either referred to the learning centres for additional support or are provided with support in the curriculum areas. Support in the curriculum areas is provided by using two teachers. Such teachers are given insufficient help in developing the skills of team teaching of basic skills. The results of assessments carried out by tutors in curriculum areas are not automatically shared with basic skills teachers. They are not linked to national standards in basic skills. Students are often re-assessed in the learning centre workshops. Communication and numeracy workshops concentrate on improving general reading, writing and number skills, rather than providing help that is directly relevant to what students are learning on their courses. Students' attendance in learning workshops is voluntary and erratic. In one numeracy workshop, attendance over a three-week period ranged from nine students to no students. Procedures to follow up the reasons for absences are weak. Attendance patterns are not analysed to inform planning and development.

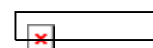
135. Too few of the staff are qualified to teach literacy and numeracy. Only 3 out of 74 have a teaching qualification in basic skills. In the current year, there has been no staff development in the teaching of basic skills. The college is aware of this and plans to remedy the weakness from next September. There are adequate resources and learning materials for basic skills in the learning centres.

136. The college is collaborating effectively with other organisations to help homeless people. Tutors and support staff work in nine hostels and day centres across London. The programmes consist of personal development, lifeskills, IT and vocational guidance. Basic skills are taught within these contexts. The basic skills sessions are arranged at times which are convenient for the homeless people. For example, one session in a hostel runs from 9.00pm to 1.00am. The college collaborates with Westminster Adult Education Service to provide basic skills support. Students who have previously attended basic skills lessons provided by the Adult Education Service are automatically given an interview for college courses.

### **Leadership and management**

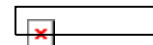
137. There is insufficient co-ordination of basic skills work across the college. A basic skills strategy and action plan has recently been produced. However, the plan pays insufficient attention to monitoring the quality of basic skills provision and support at entry level. Liaison between basic and key skills teachers and curriculum teachers is inadequate. There is insufficient observation of basic skills teaching and no analysis of the findings. There is little sharing of good practice in basic skills teaching between staff, between divisions or between college sites.

## **Part D: College data**



**Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age**

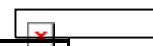
Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	15	18
2	36	17
3	35	23
4/5	0	5
Other	14	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>



*Source: Provided by the college in 2002*

**Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age**

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments%
Science	1,970	1,712	25
Agriculture	0	0	0





Construction	80	408	3
Engineering	387	510	6
Business	358	673	7
Hotel and catering	11	2	0
Health and community care	87	189	2
Art and design	486	586	7
Humanities	3,962	1,958	40
Basic education	313	1,190	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,654</b>	<b>7,228</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Provided by the college in 2002

**Table 3: Retention and achievement**

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
<b>1</b>	Starters excluding transfers	421	586	435	1,075	773	537
	Retention rate (%)	69	64	66	70	62	67
	National average (%)	77	75	76	76	73	76
	Pass rate (%)	34	40	64	51	49	75
	National average (%)	48	59	64	55	58	66
<b>2</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,397	1,221	1,354	812	741	920
	Retention rate (%)	78	78	69	81	82	66
	National average (%)	75	72	73	76	74	74
	Pass rate (%)	46	60	71	57	57	67
	National average (%)	57	65	69	57	63	66
<b>3</b>	Starters excluding transfers	1,442	1,241	1,343	1,212	1,138	1,191
	Retention rate (%)	75	69	71	76	75	76
	National average (%)	77	73	75	76	75	76
	Pass rate (%)	41	54	58	57	61	75
	National average (%)	59	65	66	59	63	67
<b>4/5</b>	Starters excluding transfers	12	23	21	327	248	182
	Retention rate (%)	75	96	71	78	80	80

	National average (%)	*	*	*	81	78	75
	Pass rate (%)	89	59	75	60	58	80
	National average (%)	*	*	*	50	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 and Tertiary colleges or Sixth Form Colleges).*

*\* numbers too low to provide a valid calculation*

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

*3. College rates for (1999/00): provided by the college in spring 2001.*

**Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection**

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	56	32	12	114
Level 2 (intermediate)	58	33	9	67
Level 1 (foundation)	51	28	21	39
Level E	70	21	9	34
<b>Totals</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>254</b>

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