Westminster Kingsway College

CONTENTS

Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Westminster Kingsway College
Type of college:	General Further Education College
Principal:	Richard Williams
Address of college:	Westminster Kingsway College
	The Vincent Square Centre
	Vincent Square
	London SW1P 2PD
Telephone number:	020 7802 8354
Fax number:	020 7931 9480
Chair of governors:	Ian Handley
Unique reference number:	130421
Name of reporting inspector:	Ela Piotrowska
Dates of inspection:	13-17 May 2002

Part A: Summary
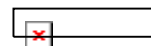
Information about the college
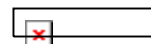
Westminster Kingsway College is a large further education (FE) college in central London. The college was formed from the merger of Westminster and Kingsway colleges in September 2000. The college is based in three London boroughs: Camden, City of Westminster and Wandsworth. The college operates on eight main sites across these boroughs (four in Camden, three in City of Westminster and one in Wandsworth). The college also makes extensive provision in the community through a network of some 60 centres, mainly located in Camden, which it uses in partnership with the local education authority (LEA), the libraries' service, social services and community organisations. The college is in the top 25% of colleges with very high relative deprivation and lies in the area covered by London Central Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

The college enrols approximately 20,000 students annually, of whom some 80% study on a part-time basis. Of these, only approximately 10% are students aged 16 to 18. Over 80% of students are over the age of 21. Some 18% of students are based in the college's off-site centres in the community; many of these students are on adult community courses provided on behalf of Camden LEA. There are only a very small number of work-based students.

The college recruits a high percentage of students from disadvantaged areas. A significant number of students do not speak English as their first language. Over 45% of the college's students define their ethnic origins as being other than white; there are over 60 nationalities and 54 different languages spoken by students. Some 56% of students are female and 44% are male.

The college offers courses that lead to a wide range of vocational, academic, professional and technical qualifications. It has some 400 students on higher education (HE) programmes. Some 62% of the college's enrolments are at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) 2 or below. There has been a significant rise in the number of basic education students, including refugees and asylum seekers in the current year, to 36% of the total enrolments. Located in central London, the college recruits students from a wide geographical area. It has identified workforce development as a key part of its strategic development. The college mission requires it to `meet the diverse needs of the London population and economy by providing a learning environment in central London that promotes a commitment to lifelong learning and the development of skills for all' by `empowering individuals, enabling communities, equipping employers: educating for life'.

How effective is the college?

Inspectors judged the overall quality of provision to be inadequate. Education and training are good in hospitality, leisure and tourism, with the exception of work-based learning in hospitality; unsatisfactory in science and mathematics, computing and information technology (IT), health and care, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and in prov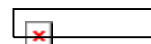ision for students with learning difficulties; and satisfactory in the other six curriculum areas inspected. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- commitment to social inclusion and lowering barriers to participation

- strong strategic direction by governors and senior managers

- effective management of change

- good range of courses

- good specialist provision.

What should be improved

- teaching and learning in many areas

- pass and retention rates

- attendance and punctuality amongst students

- curriculum management in many areas

- tutorial provision

- teaching accommodation

- access for disabled students at some centres.

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
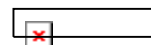
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum 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	**Unsatisfactory.** Retention rates on most advanced level courses are low and there are poor pass rates on some courses. Most level 2 courses achieve good retention rates. There is much unsatisfactory teaching. There are inadequate procedures for dealing with the lack of punctuality and poor attendance.
Business and administration	**Satisfactory.** Retention and pass rates are poor on some courses. There is much poor attendance and a lack of punctuality. Teaching is mainly satisfactory or better, with some good key skills work. There are few opportunities for commercial experience. The college offers unusual specialist courses at two of its eight main sites.
Computing and information technology	**Unsatisfactory.** Retention rates are good, but pass rates are unsatisfactory. There is a wide range of courses, which include open access drop-in centres. Attendance is poor on timetabled courses. There is good support for students with additional learning needs. There has been successful development of the course offer, but quality assurance is poor and it is too early to assess the impact of new management systems.
Hospitality, leisure and tourism (contributory grade)	**Good.** There is good teaching and effective learning, particularly in practical lessons. There are well-resourced and managed realistic working environments and an extensive range of high-quality student placements. Work-based learning in hospitality is not managed effectively. There are no assessments in the workplace and the links between on-the-job and off-the-job training are non-existent.
Health and care	**Unsatisfactory.** There are unsatisfactory and declining pass rates on many courses. Retention rates, attendance and timekeeping are also unsatisfactory, except on the foundation General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) course. Much teaching is uninspiring. The college has been effective in widening participation through its community-based NVQ work in early years.
Visual and performing arts	**Satisfactory.** There is a well-managed and resourced programme of courses in which there is much creative and imaginative work, supported by good teaching. Lack of punctuality and poor attendance detracts from student learning in what is an otherwise satisfactory curriculum area.
Humanities	**Satisfactory.** A good range of humanities is offered for students from a broad spectrum of ethic and cultural backgrounds. Students achieve well in relation to their previous educational experience. There is a strong awareness of, and good practice in, equal opportunities in all the teaching. Although there are some above average retention rates, pass rates are low.
English	**Satisfactory.** This is a satisfactory provision. Teaching is effective

	and stimulating, but poor attendance and lack of punctuality are a weakness. Some retention rates are good, but there are some poor pass rates. There is little attention to individual learning needs and there is a low level of basic English language skills, especially across level 2 provision.
English as a foreign language and modern languages	**Satisfactory.** There is good curriculum teamwork on individual sites that ensures overall effective teaching of courses. Teachers provide strong individual support for students. Retention rates on many courses are high and most students have developed good oral skills. There is insufficient use of an appropriate range of learning materials in lessons and little use of IT for teaching and learning. On many courses, pass rates are low.
English for speakers of other languages	**Unsatisfactory.** There is a narrow curriculum that limits opportunities for progression. There is poor attendance and a lack of punctuality across the programme. There is inadequate development of students' communicative oral skills. There is some good teaching on the 16 to 19 programme and adult courses, including the use of IT for language development.
Basic skills	**Satisfactory.** Teaching is well organised and lively. There is good skills development by confident learners. Effective leadership and management is leading a wholesale quality improvement programme and the development of community provision for hard to reach groups. There are insufficient vocational entry level courses, a lack of systematic initial assessment and a shortage of specialist equipment and trained staff.
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	**Unsatisfactory.** There is some effective teaching on accredited programmes that include good development of personal and social skills. However, reviews of learning are irregular, the use of behaviour management in some classes inappropriate and there are insufficient opportunities for progression.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Financial management is sound. Following the merger, there has been effective leadership and management of a radical and complex programme of change. Communications have been good and most staff welcome and feel well informed about the changes. There have been modest improvements in achievement overall and there are strong indications that managers have the capacity to improve the college. Governors have established a clear mission and strategic direction. They are knowledgeable about the college and its performance. However, many changes are new and, although there are early signs of improvements, it is too soon to judge their impact and success on the college's overall performance. There are unacceptably wide variations in the quality of teaching and learning, in attendance and punctuality, in curriculum management, in the use of quality assurance systems, in the quality of accommodation and in the use of management information. The college provides satisfactory value for money, although poor retention and pass rates affect cost effectiveness.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. The college is committed to widening participation, seeks to be fully inclusive and values diversity. It promotes the inclusion of students from a wide range of cultural and economic backgrounds: over 45% of the college's students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, while some 36% of current student enrolments are basic education students. Strategies to increase participation include: the wide range of courses; the priority afforded to the basic skills strategy; the college's extensive provision in the community; and specific appointments to the management team to respond to groups which have traditionally been hard to reach. The college is yet to address the significant access problems for those with restricted mobility and to analyse students' achievement by age, gender and ethnic grouping in order to inform reviews of provision.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?
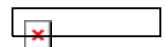
The college provides impartial advice and information for prospective students. Admission procedures are clear, although there are examples of poor initial guidance resulting in students following inappropriate programmes. Induction is good in some centres and curriculum areas, but poor in many others and arrangements for tutorial support are unsatisfactory. Students have access to a range of welfare and personal support services. Most students feel well supported. Provision for careers guidance and support is satisfactory for students aged 16 to 18, but insufficient for adult students.

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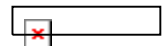
Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below:

What students like about the college

- supportive and friendly staff

- opportunities to increase skills and confidence

- practical lessons

- adult environment

- good access to information and communications technology.

What they feel could be improved

- setting of appropriate assignments

- facilities for socialising and extra-curricular activities

- information about progression

- maintenance and decoration of centres

- stability and continuity of staffing

- opportunities for work placements

- access for students with restricted mobility.

Other information
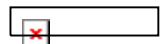
The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC). The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the LLSC. The LLSC is responsible for ensuring that the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) receives the college's post inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole
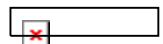
Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

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	58	23	19
19+ and WBL*	52	34	14
Learning 16-18	46	34	20
19+ and WBL*	53	39	8

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

* work-based learning

Achievement and standards

1. Westminster Kingsway College has a large number of students from disadvantaged areas. Its performance is thus measured against other general FE colleges of a similar type. Aggregating the students' achievement data for the years 1998 to 2000 shows that both retention and pass rates have shown an overall improvement at all levels. This trend of improvement has largely continued in 2000/01.

2. There are large discrepancies in the performance of students across the different curriculum areas. College staff are fully aware of this. Pass and retention rates are monitored in a number of ways, including by area of learning, by level of course and by centre. There is little evaluation of this information in relation to the gender or ethnic grouping of students.

3. The General Certificate of Education Advanced-level (GCE A-level) pass rate was 62% in 2001, a rise from 57% in the previous year. The average points score for each candidate in 2001 was 5.5. The college has firm plans to implement a system in September 2002, to measure the performance of students in relation to their previous attainment. Many of the current students have a relatively low level of previous attainment.

4. Achievement on GNVQ foundation courses is high, with an aggregated pass rate of 90%. However, the pass rates for GNVQ intermediate courses are mainly below the national averages for similar colleges. The achievement of work-based learners is poor in hospitality. The proportion of students achieving high-grade pass rates (grades A to C) for all General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects was 32% in 2001. This is low and shows a decrease from 37% in the previous two years. The pass rates for NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3 courses all show a trend of improvement over the last three years. The pass rates on NVQ level 1 courses have increased from 72% in 2000, to 94% in 2001.

5. Retention rates have generally improved over the last three years. They were particularly high in 2001 for GNVQ foundation (90%) and GNVQ precursor level 2 (93%) courses.

6. Hospitality students demonstrate high standards of technical skills in kitchens and restaurants and work well together as a team. There is a high standard of creative work in lessons in popular

music, media, dance, the foundation diploma in art and design and the first diploma in performing arts. The oral work of many students of English shows good understanding and insight, although some written work is poorly expressed. Some students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not participate sufficiently in lessons. The standard of work was low for many science students.

7. Achievement of key skills qualifications in 2000/01 was generally poor, with the exception of students following GNVQ foundation programmes. The main reason for poor achievement was inadequate portfolio development for most students. Following recent staff training, there has been an improvement in the quality of portfolios.

8. Many students progress to courses in HE, particularly from humanities and visual and performing arts courses. Progression opportunities for English as a foreign language (EFL) level 2 students are limited to EFL qualifications. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have few opportunities to progress to higher level courses.

9. The overall attendance rate in the lessons observed by inspectors was 67%. This is low compared with that of other colleges. The average attendance of students is particularly poor in science and mathematics, computing and information and communication technology (ICT), humanities, health and social care, English and ESOL curriculum areas. A lack of punctuality by students disrupted learning in a number of lessons, particularly lessons in science and mathematics, health and social care, visual and performing arts, English and ESOL courses.

16-18 year olds

10. The aggregated retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 are above the national averages for similar colleges at levels 1, 2 and 3. College information for 2000/01 indicates that retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 on level 1 and level 2 courses was 88% and 84%, respectively, both significantly above the national averages, and 75% for level 3 courses. Pass rates in 2000/01 at level 1 were 64%, which is just above the national average, but for levels 2 and 3 they are 62% and 63%, both below the national average.

Adult learners

11. The aggregated retention rates of adult students are above the national averages at levels 1, 2 and 3. In 2001, the retention rate for level 2 courses was 83%, which is significantly above the national average. Both level 1 and level 3 courses had a retention rate of 75%, which is slightly above the national average. However, pass rates are significantly below the national averages at levels 1, 2 and 3, and this is also the case for short courses.

Quality of education and training
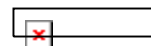
12. Teaching, learning and attainment were graded by inspectors in 241 sessions. They judged that teaching was good or better in 55% of these, satisfactory in 28% and less than satisfactory in 17%. There was a higher proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and learning on courses for students aged 16 to 18. There are significant variations in the quality of teaching in different areas of learning. The percentage of good or better lessons observed ranged from 33% in sciences and mathematics to 70% in hospitality. The highest percentage of unsatisfactory lessons was in sciences and mathematics, at 47%. There were also significant percentages of unsatisfactory teaching in ICT, at 32% and ESOL, at 19%. Students at level 1 and 2 receive marginally better teaching than those at level 3.

13. Many teachers are informative and provide students with a range of stimulating activities. There is good rapport between students and teachers and teachers have a clear focus on students

achieving their individual learning goals. Teachers used effective strategies to manage challenging behaviour. In the best lessons, teachers skilfully integrated awareness of the cultural diversity of students. However, there were great variations in the quality of teaching both within and across areas of learning. In the large number of less successful lessons, the planning of lessons failed to take account of the range of students' needs. Lessons were dull, teachers talked too much and failed to offer students opportunities to demonstrate their learning. They made insufficient checks on students' learning. In some lessons, poor classroom management prevented students' involvement and progress.

14. In many lessons, teachers were not successful in meeting the needs of students with widely differing abilities. Much teaching is not matched to individual learning needs and neglects students' prior learning. Teachers failed to adjust activities and teaching resources to take into account individual students' experiences and abilities. The teaching of theory was not sufficiently linked to practical work and teachers failed to develop students' understanding of professional practice. There is poor attendance and a lack of punctuality on many courses that has an adverse effect on group dynamics, and students' motivation and achievement.

15. There are particularly good facilities to support students' learning in hospitality and the visual and performing arts and a high standard of work placements in hospitality. However, links with employers and between on-the-job and off-the-job training are generally inadequate. Modern apprentices in hospitality have no assessment in the workplace. Links with employers are not used effectively to ensure that the choice of specialisation or level made by learners reflects their needs or what employers can provide in the way of training. Many of the employers and learners on the hospitality course are frustrated by this lack of connection, and some see the time spent at college as a waste of time.

16. There is little consistency in the arrangements for teaching key skills across the college. Initial diagnostic assessment of key skills in not uniformly effective within and across centres. Key skills are fully integrated with GNVQ foundation courses. On other vocational courses key skills are taught separately, but set in context according to the main programme of study. For academic advanced level courses, key skills are taught separately and are not directly related to the courses being followed.

17. Assessment is regular in most areas of learning. Most students undertake initial assessment, but procedures are not standardised across the college and there are examples of students being placed on inappropriate courses. On some courses, assignments are well planned and vocationally relevant. Feedback on written work is good in some curriculum areas, but some students have insufficient information about how well they are doing and how they can improve their performance. Assessment information is made available to personal tutors, but insufficient use is made of assessment information in the planning of courses and the setting of individual learning targets for students. Work has begun on the review of assessment practice to ensure standardisation across curriculum areas.

18. Most teachers are well qualified with appropriate teaching and vocational qualifications. Many teachers have relevant industrial and professional expertise. Recruitment of appropriately qualified staff has been difficult in some curriculum areas. This, along with a high proportion of agency staff, has led to a lack of continuity for some students. The college is seeking to reduce its reliance on agency staff with the creation of more fractional posts.

19. The quality of accommodation varies across the college centres. There are some extremely spacious, well-furnished teaching rooms alongside areas which are gloomy, in poor decorative repair and with poor acoustics. Many classrooms and communal areas lack stimulating wall displays. There are good learning resources and equipment in hospitality, the visual and performing arts and in IT. Some of the college centres do not have lifts to upper floors. This severely limits access for students with restricted mobility. There are extremely few sports facilities.

20. The college is developing a range of courses that meet the needs and requirements of local people and employers and which build on the college's areas of expertise. It has undertaken extensive market research to re-position itself following the merger, taking careful account of what

other colleges in the area are offering. Specialised courses have been developed to meet the needs of both students and employers. In hospitality, there is a project aimed at disadvantaged students. It provides training and work experience in one of London's foremost restaurants at NVQ levels 1 and 2 in food preparation. An externally funded ICT course aimed at training women in technology has continued after the end of the funding period. However, there are few established links with industry. There is little work experience in programmes, other than in hospitality and this has adversely affected students' learning experience.

21. Partnerships with local schools lead to good progression opportunities for students. Students from a local sixth form college are attending GCE Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) ICT lessons, because their own college did not offer this subject. In humanities, there is a link with a consortium of schools through which the college can offer students a wider range of GCE AS and A-level subjects than the schools themselves. The hospitality department has already taken some young people who are unhappy at school. Partnerships are in place to offer provision to young people aged between 14 and 16 in the next academic year.

22. The college has developed a range of initiatives to widen participation of people who are not traditional users of education and training. A joint appointment has been made with local National Health Service (NHS) trusts, to contribute to the development of the NHS workforce by providing basic skills training for NHS employees. An award-winning innovative neighbourhood and community programme provides literacy and IT education and training for hard-to-reach learners, including the homeless and ex-offenders. A large number of these students progress to other courses within the college. There is an extensive programme of community learning. Other links with employers are offered through franchise arrangements with education partners.

23. The college has developed specialised courses at many of its centres. There are few progression opportunities for learners in some areas of learning. For example, there are few links between ESOL provision and the vocational areas and ICT learners at one centre have only two courses to choose from. There is no foundation level provision in childcare, although there is good internal progression from the more general foundation level GNVQ in health and social care. There is currently no progression route for students who wish to study food service above level 1. However, the GCSE English course has been designed to follow on from a preliminary course, making it easier for students to follow the GCSE course successfully. ESOL provision is used to provide access to HE for adults whose first language is not English, both in humanities and in business at one college centre. ESOL and learning support is available alongside community provision in care, providing routes to NVQ level 3.

24. The college has effective arrangements for pre-entry advice and guidance. A good range of well-prepared publicity materials provides clear and appropriate information. Admissions procedures are clear and well documented. A call centre records the details of any enquiry and receives application forms, distributing these to advice and guidance centres at the appropriate college centre. If additional learning needs are identified from the application form, the prospective student is invited to an advice and guidance session prior to interview. The college has met the Information Advice and Guidance criteria for its advice and guidance services. Assistance is available during interviews from the additional learning support team. Interviews are undertaken by staff from the relevant curriculum team and the documentation is then returned to the advice and guidance centre. Entry criteria for some courses are not always met and there are some examples of poor initial guidance, resulting in students following inappropriate programmes. There are plans for an additional check on entry criteria during enrolment in the coming academic year. Curriculum teams provide induction for students, although the quality of the induction process is not uniformly good across curriculum areas and centres.

25. The tutorial provision is generally unsatisfactory. Most students have a personal tutor who oversees their attendance, punctuality and progress. There are several examples of effective tutorial support, but some group tutorials are poorly planned and not well managed. Most tutorials do not include individual reviews of progress against agreed learning targets and issues relating to student performance are not always addressed. Systems for monitoring and addressing attendance and punctuality are incomplete. Attendance records are made available to tutors, but there are no guidelines on how often this information should be reviewed, or on what is considered to be a

satisfactory level of attendance. Tutorials are not part of the college-wide observation system and monitoring of tutorial provision is currently inadequate. The college has recognised these weaknesses and has planned significant changes to the tutorial provision from September 2002, which include a much greater emphasis on individual target setting and the monitoring of students' performance. Most students feel well supported on their programmes and there is effective individual support from teachers in a number of curriculum areas. Careers guidance is generally satisfactory for students aged 16 to 19, but insufficient for adult students.

26. There is satisfactory provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Diagnosis of these additional needs is through notification on application forms, initial interview, or testing of literacy and numeracy skills during enrolment or induction. Systems for diagnostic assessment, however, are not uniform across the college. In most cases, appropriate support is available to students with additional learning needs or sensory impairments. Access for students with mobility problems is restricted at most centres. The provision of support for students with dyslexia, or for those who need help with basic skills is sometimes limited by an inadequate number of trained staff. The college is seeking to recruit additional staff and offering training to teachers interested in supporting students with additional learning needs. Feedback to tutors about students' progress in additional learning support is variable, but this should be addressed by the planned changes in tutorial provision. Not all centres have accommodation set aside for learning support. Analysis of retention and pass rate data for students receiving additional support indicates that it has had a positive impact on retention rates for all courses and also on pass rates, which are broadly in line with national averages.

27. Students have access to appropriate welfare and personal support systems. Personal advisers working in student support are well informed about sources of support, including financial advice, childcare facilities and access to counsellors. Students referred to external agencies have their attendance monitored and tutors are usually informed about their progress. A tracking system is planned to ensure that this monitoring process is more rigorous. Changes to the tutorial provision from September 2002 include the provision of guidance on personal, social and health issues, organised by student services' staff.

Leadership and management
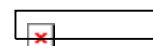
28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the college merger in September 2000, management has been restructured at all levels and many new appointments have been made. At the time of the inspection, some senior and most middle managers had been in post for a relatively short time. A lot has been achieved since the merger. Management of complex change has been effective. There has been extensive training for new managers. The college has moved from a state of financial instability to one of relative security. The strategic direction of the new college has been well articulated, clearly communicated and is based on extensive needs analysis. A more rigorous framework for quality assurance has been introduced. There have been some modest improvements in achievement overall. However, on many courses students perform badly and the standards achieved are significantly lower than they should be. Five of the twelve curriculum areas inspected are unsatisfactory. There are unacceptably wide variations in the quality of teaching across the college. Attendance and punctuality are poor in some areas. It is relatively early to judge the impact of new management arrangements in the merged college. However, actions taken so far indicate that senior managers have the capacity to improve the college.

29. The principal, governors and leadership team provide clear strategic direction to the work of the college. The values, mission and strategic objectives are understood and shared by the majority of staff. There is a strong commitment to widening participation. College managers clearly identified the key priorities needed to develop the infrastructure of the new college. At a time of considerable change, communications have been good and most staff feel well informed. The college aims to align its curriculum in response to the needs of dominant sectors of employment in London with a

focus on business and IT, hospitality and the creative industries. There are weaknesses in development planning both at college and centre level. Targets in these plans are frequently not sufficiently specific or measurable. Resource implications have not been identified and there are no clear success criteria.

30. The curriculum is managed within centres and schools. Centre directors and heads of school report to the director for quality and standards or to the director for strategy and innovation. Curriculum management is effective in some areas, such as basic skills, visual and performing arts and hospitality. However, curriculum management is unsatisfactory in health and care, science and mathematics, ESOL, provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ICT. This represents a significant proportion of the college's work. There are also aspects of unsatisfactory management in business and English. Centre development plans lack sufficient analysis and are over descriptive. It is not yet clear that there is the management capacity at curriculum level to implement the improvements required.

31. There is a new and thorough framework for quality assurance. Curriculum teams meet on a termly basis to review their courses. They consider the performance achieved against targets for retention and pass rates, students' views, the quality of teaching and learning and support for students. The reviews identify actions for improvement. They are at an early stage in their implementation and vary greatly in their effectiveness. While some reviews are very focused and detailed, a significant proportion, do not cover all the areas to be reviewed, and staff fail to review the outcome of agreed actions from the last meeting. Senior management monitor the quality of these interim reviews and give feedback to curriculum teams on how to improve both the process and outcomes. However, this feedback is general in its nature and does not focus on specific curriculum areas. Teamwork is not well established in care, across hospitality courses, or in science and mathematics or ICT.

32. There is an increasing use of management information to set and monitor targets for retention and pass rates and many staff have had recent training in this area. Nevertheless, the use and monitoring of targets is not well established in many areas, including ESOL, humanities, hospitality and science and mathematics. Self-assessment at whole college and curriculum area level is generally open and self-critical. It identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. A new and extensive cycle of lesson observations has been introduced. As yet, these observations are not used in curriculum team reviews. The assessment of the quality of teaching is not effectively used. In several curriculum areas, such as health and social care, basic skills, science and mathematics, grades awarded internally are overgenerous compared to those awarded by inspectors. In unsatisfactory areas, such as care, and science and mathematics, there is insufficient emphasis by teachers and managers on improving teaching and learning.

33. Students' views are surveyed and analysed by college managers and used to plan actions, where appropriate. For example, one of the resource centres is open for longer as a result. The college does not systematically seek the views of employers or parents. Service standards for support functions are, as yet, only in draft. There are satisfactory arrangements for monitoring the quality of franchised provision, but the corporation does not receive regular reports on this aspect of the college's work. The college does not use information about students' prior attainment at entry, or their subsequent achievements, to set targets for students, or to evaluate performance. It has, however, researched and identified the most appropriate ways in which it might do this, and plans to implement them in September 2002. The college has not undertaken sufficiently detailed analysis of the reasons why students leave their courses before completing them. Nor does it analyse the destinations of its students, as a basis for judgements about the effectiveness of its courses.

34. The college is strongly committed to equal opportunities and actively promotes the inclusion of students from a wide range of cultural and economic backgrounds. There is a comprehensive equal opportunities policy and there are clear responsibilities for implementation, monitoring and review. There is also a clear structure for monitoring equal opportunities in complaints, recruitment, employment policy, professional development and performance review. The college's commitment to inclusion and widening participation is reflected in its good range of courses and its provision in the community. Students feel that they are treated with fairness and respect. The emphasis on equal opportunities, however, does not extend sufficiently to franchised work. Furthermore, there

are significant access problems for those with restricted mobility. The college does not analyse students' achievements by age, gender or ethnic grouping.

35. The college is financially well managed. Clear planning cycles link the allocation of resources to educational priorities. This year, budgets were largely allocated on an historical basis, but the college is moving to a system that allocates budgets according to data-based needs. In order to secure efficiencies, data from similar colleges are being used by the college as reference points in planning its expenditure. As yet, course costing is not well established and the college does not analyse how much it costs for individual students to gain different qualifications.

36. New and comprehensive arrangements for appraisal have recently been finalised. Since the merger, however, relatively few staff have been appraised. Furthermore, managers have no overview of the proportion of staff appraised over the last 18 months. Plans for staff development reflect the priorities in the strategic plan and there is greater emphasis on helping staff to gain appropriate teaching qualifications. Some staff have had little recent professional updating. Lesson observations, appraisal and staff development are at present not linked. There are clear arrangements for staff induction, but no staff handbook or mentoring scheme for new staff.

37. The governing body is strong. Governors have an appropriate range of skills and experience that are a valuable asset. Members are closely involved in the setting and monitoring of strategy. They understand well the difference between governance and management and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the recently merged college well. They are very well informed and are willing to challenge, probe and hold college managers to account. They set and monitor clear and appropriate goals for the principal and college managers. The recently established quality and standards committee has refocused governors on the importance of students' achievements. The college provides satisfactory value for money, although poor retention and pass rates affect cost effectiveness.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas
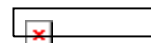
Science and mathematics
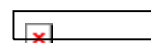
Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- good retention rates on level 2 courses

- good retention and pass rates on NVQ pharmacy courses

- good standard of practical work.

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching

- low retention rates on advanced level courses

- low pass rates on some courses

- lack of punctuality and poor attendance

- insufficient monitoring of students' progress.

Scope of provision

38. At the Grays Inn Centre, the college offers science and mathematics programmes at GCSE, and GCE AS/A level. There is also a GNVQ intermediate and Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) in science and a foundation degree course linked to City University. In addition, there is a pharmacy conversion course for students with outdated or overseas qualifications. A veterinary nursing certificate is offered as a part-time course and recruits well; this provision is franchised. A small number of students study GCSE mathematics at two other college centres. There are about 300 students studying mathematics and more than 600 students on science courses. The NVQ level 3 pharmacy programme attracts employed students from a wide geographical area. Adults are welcomed on all the courses.

Achievement and standards

39. Retention rates on all GCE A-level programmes have been consistently below the national average for similar colleges for the previous three years. Retention rates are good on level 2 courses and GCE AS courses. A significant number of students continue beyond the expected end date of their programme. Two-year GCE A-level biology and chemistry have poor pass rates. Pass rates in GCSE biology and chemistry improved significantly in 2000/01 and now compare favourably with the national average; but GCSE mathematics students are not achieving appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding and pass rates have not improved significantly. NVQ level 3 pharmacy has good pass and retention rates. There is no analysis of students' attainments at entry to predict and set appropriate targets for progress and achievement.

40. The standard of practical work was good. Practical observation of mesophytic and xerophytic leaves was used to link practical work with theory in a biology class. The physics technician offered GNVQ intermediate students good support in the construction of effective electronic circuits. Assessed practical coursework was of a good standard. However, the standard of students' written and oral work was weak in a large number of lessons. Learning and attainment levels were poor in many lessons. This is often due to the lack of appropriate language support for students whose first language is not English.

41. Students' punctuality and attendance are unsatisfactory. Many students arrive late and disrupt the lesson. Students' attendance in the observed lessons was only 60%.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GNVQ intermediate science	2	No. of starts	19	44	22
		% retention	79	84	86
		% pass rate	73	59	42
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	398	311	367
		% retention	83	81	88
		% pass rate	25	28	30
GCE A-level physics (2 year)	3	No. of starts	76	67	42
		% retention	28	31	48
		% pass rate	67	45	80
GCE A-level mathematics (2 year)	3	No. of starts	127	165	119
		% retention	33	33	27
		% pass rate	50	37	78
GCE A-level chemistry 2 year	3	No. of starts	106	91	75
		% retention	25	42	36
		% pass rate	54	45	74
GCE A-level biology (2 year)	3	No. of starts	70	89	62
		% retention	36	55	60
		% pass rate	40	59	68

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

Quality of education and training

42. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching. Lesson planning and teaching take little account of the range of students' differing abilities. Teachers speak for too long in many lessons and give students few opportunities to demonstrate their understanding, skills and achievement. They do not check students' learning regularly and thoroughly. Students are offered few opportunities to develop study skills and homework is irregular. Teachers make little use of ICT to promote learning. Many of the lessons observed were revision sessions. Teachers used these to go through past papers, but failed to elicit contributions from students and there was little progress in students' understanding. One teacher guided students effectively in the development of revision skills by requiring them to devise topic summaries. In the best lessons, students are involved in a wide range of activities. For example, an NVQ level 3 pharmacy lesson began with a review of previous work, followed by students giving short presentations in groups on coagulation, conditions related to blood dysfunctions, drugs affecting the blood and a glossary of terms. Case studies were used that related to the cultural diversity of the students.

43. In many lessons, most students do not have English as their first language. Teachers do not adapt their methods of teaching to take account of this and little consideration is given to the difficulties students have with speaking, writing and reading or with the vocabulary of a subject.

44. Work is not assessed regularly on all programmes and the feedback to students is often not

detailed enough to be helpful. Initial assessment results are not used as a basis for planning teaching. Teachers' files do not have detailed records of assessment results, there is no analysis of students' progress and demanding targets are not set for students. Teachers fail to identify the underlying reasons for poor student performance, and rely instead on general statements such as `attend more regularly, work harder, complete assignments'. Internal moderation and verification procedures are thorough in mathematics, but less so in other subjects.

45. Teachers are readily accessible to students outside of lessons. There is also specialist subject support available in regular science and mathematics workshop sessions where students drop in for help and advice. These workshops are highly valued by students.

46. The accommodation for science and mathematics lessons is not conducive to learning. Insufficient attention is paid to aspects of health and safety. The lack of computers in mathematics classrooms prevents the use of some modern software to help students' learning. There are no displays of students' current work. Some mathematics teachers have produced useful and imaginative learning materials, including a website that includes schemes of work. It also contains exercises for students to work through and links to other useful sites. There are sufficient numbers of well-qualified staff.

Leadership and management

47. Curriculum team leaders in mathematics and science were appointed less than a year ago. Currently management of the curriculum is weak. There is little teamwork and insufficient sharing of good practice. Termly staff meetings take place, but there is too little focus on the importance of improving teaching and learning. Targets for retention and pass are not linked to effective action. The destinations of GCE A-level students are not monitored. The lesson observation scheme is not sufficiently thorough. There is no adequate provision for cover when staff are absent. The self-assessment process lacks detailed analysis of both qualitative and quantitative information. There is no co-ordination across centres for GCSE mathematics. There are few curriculum links with external organisations, such as local schools. Students in mathematics and science take part in a range of enrichment activities that include museum visits and external lectures.

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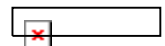
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good, varied teaching

- wide range of specialist courses

- effective teaching of key skills.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates on some courses

- poor links with industry

- lack of detail in feedback to students.

Scope of provision

48. A wide and varied curriculum covers GCSE, GCE AS/A level, GNVQ at foundation, intermediate and AVCE, and Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) at levels 2 to 4. There are many opportunities for progression and a wide range of professional courses. The college has a well-established course for bilingual personal assistants that integrates English language teaching with secretarial skill training. The course caters for students with a variety of mother tongues, although all the teaching is in English. At another centre, situated close to the law courts, there is a specialist course for barristers' clerks. A separate AVCE business course successfully integrates ESOL provision and aims to provide a route to HE for speakers of other languages. Currently, there are 499 students aged 16 to 18, of whom 61 are part time. In addition, there are 1,437 adult students, of whom 1,127 are part time. Many of the courses are available in the evening and on more than one site.

Achievement and standards

49. Pass rates vary widely across the curriculum area. The Certificate in Personnel Practice has been running for several years and now has a well-established reputation. In 2000/01, no students left the course early, and 92% were successful. The GCE AS business in 2001 achieved a 71% pass rate, with a 93% retention rate. However, on the GCE A-level business course, pass rates are below the national average, and the retention rate is also low. Pass rates for GNVQ intermediate business in 2000/01 dropped to 26% and to 34% for the level 1 office practice course in the same year. Retention rates are generally satisfactory.

50. Standards of learning and attainment vary across the courses. In some lessons, teachers do not provide sufficiently demanding work and do not set targets for individual students. Many students are unsure about their current level of performance or the level achieved in assessed work recently returned to them. Many are unsure how they are going to perform in their imminent examinations or of the grade they might expect. An exception was in one bilingual secretarial lesson where students were asked to set a target for their performance in tests. Teachers have no consistent approach to deal with the lack of punctuality and poor attendance that occurs in many lessons.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Office procedures	1	No. of starts	23	43	49
		% retention	95	88	74
		% pass rate	52	57	34
GNVQ foundation	1	No. of starts	18	40	31
		% retention	56	68	90

		% pass rate	40	73	82
GNVQ intermediate	2	No. of starts	128	94	89
		% retention	70	77	79
		% pass rate	69	71	26
AAT intermediate	3	No. of starts	41	23	21
		% retention	76	74	86
		% pass rate	28	0	64
GCE A-level business	3	No. of starts	68	56	99
		% retention	62	79	63
		% pass rate	65	70	67
Certificate in Personnel Practice	3	No. of starts	39	43	37
		% retention	90	95	100
		% pass rate	74	92	92

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

Quality of education and training

51. Most teaching was satisfactory or better. In most lessons, teaching is well planned. Teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching methods and maintain a good pace of work. Most learning resources, including handouts and worksheets are good. Teachers have good classroom management skills and ensure that a disciplined learning atmosphere is maintained. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are suitably qualified and experienced. Group work is well managed to ensure that all students are involved. Teachers are good at directing questions to individual students and at managing class debates. In revision lessons, students use appropriate business terminology and are able to recall work covered previously and make links across the work they have done for the whole course. Students who are in full-time or part-time employment are able to link their work experience to the theory. Additional learning support needs are identified and appropriate staff provide one-to-one support in lessons. These include signers, scribes, ESOL and other language support staff.

52. The teaching of key skills and their assessment is effective and much of this has been successfully integrated with the vocational context of the course. GNVQ intermediate students demonstrated effective communication skills when giving an illustrated talk on a chosen subject in small groups. GNVQ foundation students successfully debated and negotiated the content of an agenda for a team meeting. Advanced students use ICT effectively to display assignment work.

53. Teacher assessment and feedback is not yet carried out consistently well at all centres. Teachers often do not comment on or correct errors in grammar and expression. Students with language needs are not, therefore, given the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and improve. Some teachers rely upon oral feedback and give the student no written record of comments.

54. There are poor links with employers. Work placements are organised for GNVQ foundation students only. Students on vocational courses do not conduct primary research in industry or commerce and schemes of work do not include plans for industrial contacts. Students do, however, use the Internet and library effectively to gather material for assignments.

55. Many of the classrooms are bare and shabby and have poor furniture. Access is difficult for those with restricted mobility at the three main centres. Some library texts are dated.

Leadership and management

56. Curriculum team meetings are not well attended as many staff have teaching commitments or are on fractional or agency contracts. This results in little contact between teachers and means that there are few opportunities for them to share ideas and develop more consistent approaches to teaching and learning. Although action plans are noted at meetings, many of these remain outstanding for long periods of time. Quality assurance procedures are new and have yet to have an impact upon student performance. The self-assessment report is generally accurate and identifies the main strengths and weaknesses.

Computing and information technology
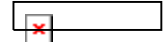
Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- good range of courses to widen participation

- high retention rates on GNVQ and short courses.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching of theory

- low pass rates on many courses

- poor students' attendance.

Scope of provision

57. The college offers a good range of programmes in ICT. Full-time courses are available at two college centres and there are part-time courses at all centres. The college also provides open-access drop-in centres at three sites with tutors on hand to provide help and effective learning materials. Over 130 full-time and part-time courses are offered for over 3,000 students. Courses range from entry level IT to Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) and cover business applications, computer programming and networking, computer-aided design and web technologies. Recruitment to many business application courses is good, particularly at the Belmont Street drop-in centre. Qualifications available include GCSE, GCE A level, AVCE, GNVQ, European computing driving licence (ECDL), the certificate in computer applications, and the national diploma in computing qualifications. Other courses prepare students for other professional qualifications. Some introductory courses are run in libraries and community centres. There are good opportunities for progression to further ICT courses for students entering lower level programmes.

Achievement and standards

58. Retention rates are generally good on GNVQ and short courses and satisfactory on most others. Many pass rates are unsatisfactory. Pass rates are well below national averages on Integrated Business Technology level 2 (IBT 2), on many short courses, and on the Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in computing.

59. Key skills are integrated effectively with GNVQ programmes and students are knowledgeable about how key skills development supports their main course work. Although standards of attainment are generally satisfactory, some students are placed on courses that are not appropriate given their prior learning and attainment and they struggle to be successful. In the best lessons, students could clearly explain how they were developing skills and made good contributions to each other's learning.

60. Students' attendance is poor. The average attendance in the lessons observed was 63%. On some courses, all the students were punctual at lessons, but, on others, students were up to 45 minutes late for lessons, and some teachers failed to question this lateness effectively.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Business software applications (short course)	entry	No. of starts	98	181	145
		% retention	88	75	74
		% pass rate	47	82	73
City and Guilds 7261 modules (short courses)	1	No. of starts	1,447	1,347	869
		% retention	96	91	93
		% pass rate	59	53	50
Computer literacy and information technology (short course)	1	No. of starts	557	335	320
		% retention	88	84	84
		% pass rate	37	43	55
IBT 2 (short course)	2	No. of starts	114	152	147
		% retention	86	88	90
		% pass rate	43	43	24
GNVQ intermediate IT (1-year course)	2	No. of starts	39	73	77
		% retention	82	73	89
		% pass rate	72	60	63
National diploma in computer studies	3	No. of starts	44	57	67
		% retention	70	53	46
		% pass rate	80	54	67

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

Quality of education and training

61. There was much unsatisfactory teaching. Most theory classes are dull. Students are bored, and many disengaged from learning. Many lessons fail to achieve their learning objectives. Some lesson plans and schemes of work are inadequate and the narrow range of teaching methods used by

teachers and some poor classroom management limits students' participation and progress. Some individual learning plans fail to take into account the prior learning of students. Effective teaching was observed on the GNVQ and GCE AS courses. In the best lessons, teachers engaged all the students in productive work and monitored their progress thoroughly. In these lessons, students enjoy learning, and projects, tasks and assignment sheets stimulate their learning.

62. Students aged 16 to 18 are assessed regularly and feedback is constructive and supportive. Assessment methods are varied and include direct observation, checking written and computer work, and on-line assignment projects. Monitoring and assessment of the work of adult students is less thorough. Initial assessment is effective in identifying students' additional learning needs and the support they require. Tutors modify their language appropriately for young people and for those who have English as a second language. The monitoring of students' progress is unsatisfactory at the drop-in centres.

63. Most teachers have commercial experience and are technically competent, but insufficient numbers have teaching qualifications. The computer equipment on all sites is of a good standard with up-to-date software and many new hardware devices. However, the lack of monitoring and control of student workstations results in some poor class discipline. Some classroom layouts are not conducive to effective student monitoring and, in some cases, the location of demonstration machines means that teachers are unable to see their class. Internet and library facilities are used effectively for research. At some sites, accommodation and furniture are poor. Classrooms are untidy and some furniture broken. There is poor access for users of wheelchairs on most sites and little specialist equipment for students with disabilities. Recruitment of specialist IT tutors is difficult and often no replacement tutors are available. Concern for health and safety is not promoted effectively to students.

Leadership and management

64. The management of computing and IT has been effective in rationalising the curriculum, closing some unsuccessful courses and developing a coherent course offer. Courses are offered at a variety of levels and meet the need of the local community. One course is designed for local women and offers an internationally recognised qualification alongside personal development activities. There are a variety of progression routes at all levels. However, poor access to courses for users of wheelchairs means that the provision is not fully inclusive. A new system of teaching observations has been introduced and is being implemented thoroughly. However, it is too early, as yet, to evaluate its effect. Quality assurance is poor and not well understood by teachers. There is a lack of involvement by staff in curriculum team meetings and some staff are not clear about their roles and responsibilities. Record keeping, internal verification and student monitoring are not carried out consistently. There is insufficient use of target setting to improve performance.

Hospitality, leisure and tourism
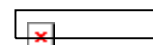
Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning

- high standard of practical skills

- well-resourced and managed realistic work environments

- extensive, good-quality placements.

Weaknesses

- ineffective management of work-based learners

- few industrial links in leisure and tourism.

Scope of provision

65. The college offers a range of full-time and part-time provision in hospitality, leisure and tourism. NVQ courses are available in food preparation and cooking at levels 1 to 4, along with AVCE in hospitality and catering, the Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA) certificate, and a range of short courses including the national licensee's certificate and food hygiene. In leisure and tourism, courses are available at GNVQ foundation and intermediate level and at AVCE. There are also a number of short courses, for example, for airfares and ticketing and assistant fitness instructing. Access courses are available for both hospitality and leisure and tourism. There are currently 326 full-time students and over 1,000 part-time students. There are 48 work-based learners studying on foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship programmes.

Achievement and standards

66. In 2001, retention rates were satisfactory on most courses, but poor on GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism, GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering and NVQ 3 food preparation and cooking. Retention rates were good on GNVQ foundation and intermediate leisure and tourism. Most pass rates are satisfactory, but poor on GNVQ foundation and advanced level leisure and tourism, GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering, national licensee's certificate and HCIMA professional certificate. Pass rates were good on NVQ levels 1 and 4. The NVQ level 2 food preparation and cooking programme, with 285 students in 2001, shows an improvement in retention and pass rates.

67. The college does not hold pass and retention rate data on work-based learners on its current database. However, information from other sources shows that the retention rate on foundation modern apprentice programmes is declining and that only a few students achieved their qualification. All assessments for work-based learners take place at the college. This means that students are unable to achieve their qualification if they attend college irregularly. There is no system in place to accommodate students who would like to move more quickly through the course or those who would like to go at a slower pace.

68. Students achieve good standards in food preparation and pay particular attention to detail in presentation. They demonstrate high standards of technical skills in kitchens and restaurants. Students work well together as a team. Students are confident in their learning and proud of their achievements. Teachers give constructive comments to help students improve their performance. Students' portfolios are well organised and presented. Spelling and grammatical errors, however, are not always corrected.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hospitality, leisure and tourism, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
NVQ catering and hospitality, preparing and serving food	1	No. of starts	*	73	76
		% retention	*	79	82
		% pass rate	*	90	95
NVQ catering and hospitality food preparation and cooking	2	No. of starts	486	448	285
		% retention	52	55	81
		% pass rate	69	71	73
GNVQ intermediate leisure and tourism	2	No. of starts	34	52	46
		% retention	81	71	85
		% pass rate	73	81	72
NVQ catering and hospitality kitchen and larder work	3	No. of starts	31	91	75
		% retention	90	69	76
		% pass rate	75	86	86
GNVQ advanced leisure and tourism	3	No. of starts	53	46	48
		% retention	73	65	62
		% pass rate	73	81	93
GNVQ advanced hospitality and catering	3	No. of starts	34	29	21
		% retention	74	69	52
		% pass rate	60	47	40

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

69. There is much good teaching. Most lessons have detailed lesson plans that relate to appropriate schemes of work. Students work well together as a team and have well-defined roles when working in production kitchens and restaurants that are open to the public. There are good learning materials for practical subjects. During lessons in kitchens and restaurants, students work under appropriate pressure. In practical lessons, teachers take careful account of students' individual learning needs. Teachers provide students with good individual guidance, give effective demonstrations and make appropriate evaluations of individual performance. In some theory lessons, however, teachers fail to make students think clearly, maintain their interest or check whether they have grasped the key points.

70. Work placements are of an extremely high standard. Most employers have a structured training programme. The standard of training in the workplace is high. Most learners on foundation modern apprentice programmes are trained by employers to level 3 standard. There are no links between training programmes in the workplace and those in the college, and communication between employers and college staff is minimal.

71. Most assignments are well planned and vocationally relevant. Students' work is carefully marked. The procedures for internal verification are thorough. Students on full-time courses have weekly timetabled tutorials and receive good pastoral care. Individual learning plans outline targets and students' progress towards achieving them is monitored during tutorials. Students value the

tutorial support and describe the staff as friendly and approachable; students also commented that they felt as though they were treated as adults. Learning support needs are identified at interview and induction and those students needing additional support are referred to the college student support unit. There is insufficient careers advice available for students. Assessment of work-based students is insufficient. Students are only assessed on the work they do at college, with no assessments carried out in the workplace. Students' reviews are carried out and posted to employers at the end of each term, but these do not record progress or set targets.

72. All staff are well qualified. Some staff have recent industrial experience or have updated their skills. The need for continual professional development has not been adequately promoted or facilitated by the college. The library book stock is good with a comprehensive range of trade magazines and journals. Students have easy access to computers and they routinely use the Internet for research. There is some use of vocationally relevant IT through the use of a sale control system in the restaurant and there is an interactive assessment package for NVQ students. The practical facilities at the Westminster site are of a high standard and are equipped with an appropriate range of industrial standard equipment. There is a high-quality specialist facility for preparing and cooking international cuisine. The kitchens used by work-based learners at the Battersea site are not as well equipped and do not provide appropriate experience for level 3 students. There are very few sports facilities.

Leadership and management

73. The area is well managed. The college has recently revised its management structure and clarified lines of responsibility and accountability. There is a clear sense of direction. Staff are keen to ensure that standards remain high and that improvements are made in retention and pass rates. A number of initiatives have been put in place to improve the provision. Managers are aware of the weaknesses in work-based learning, including the insufficient staffing that is currently allocated to co-ordinate work-based learning. However, some aspects of curriculum management are currently weak. Management information is not readily available to use in developing strategies for improvement at team level. There is an absence of a coherent quality assurance framework to ensure that detailed evidence from appropriate sources is systematically drawn together to help staff plan improvement. There are difficulties in communication between sites and there are no procedures to ensure regular and routine exchange of good practice between staff on different sites. Leisure and tourism is taught at three different sites and the same course is taught at two, but the staff rarely meet to discuss curriculum issues and share ideas and teaching practice.

Health and social care
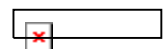
Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- successful GNVQ foundation health and social care course

- good access for local community to NVQs in early years

- high progression rates into nursing from the access to HE courses.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates

- unsatisfactory retention rates

- poor students' attendance and timekeeping

- much uninspiring teaching.

Scope of provision

74. The college offers courses in care for full-time students at levels 1 to 3 at two centres. Most of the students are aged 16 to 19. Some 43 part-time adult students are taking NVQ awards in care at levels 2 and 3. There are 57 full-time early year students enrolled on certificate or diploma courses; the majority of these are aged 16 to 19. Some 69 part-time students are enrolled for NVQ early years at levels 2 or 3. Playwork is offered at NVQ levels 2 and 3 and the introducing childminding practice course has a small number of enrolments. Some of the part-time students on these courses attend community-based classes.

Achievement and standards

75. Retention and pass rates are poor on many courses with many below the national average. Low retention rates are recorded on the GNVQ intermediate and advanced health and social care and the diploma and certificate in early years care and education courses. Pass rates have also declined on these courses and on the access to nursing and the health studies course. Pass and retention rates are very good on the GNVQ foundation course.

76. There are good progression rates of 64% from the GNVQ foundation course on to higher levels and, in 2001, 24% of the students obtained relevant work. Progression from the access course into nursing is good. In 2001, 80% of students gained HE nursing places. Of the present group of students, 86% have already received HE offers, some of them unconditional offers.

77. Some of the students' written work is of a good standard. However, on many full-time courses, students hand in assignments late. Some students are not developing self-study techniques. They demonstrate considerable differences in their ability to relate new theories to existing knowledge and set this in an occupational context. Students' work is marked and returned quickly. Some teachers correct grammar, spellings and sentence structure, but others do not. Feedback sheets are used, but some teachers put in much more detail than others and students' comments are rarely completed. There is poor attendance and students' very late arrival late in many lessons adversely affects teaching and learning.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion	1999	2000	2001

	year:				
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	13	16	19
		% retention	54	94	100
		% pass rate	0	80	95
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	33	33	33
		% retention	79	76	67
		% pass rate	62	76	59
NVQ early years, care and education (1 year)	2	No. of starts	8	38	47
		% retention	75	79	79
		% pass rate	40	63	35
CACHE certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	*	13	32
		% retention	*	54	66
		% pass rate	*	7	52
GNVQ advanced health and social care	3	No. of starts	39	22	43
		% retention	77	73	63
		% pass rate	65	47	62
Diploma in nursery nursing	3	No. of starts	14	*	13
		% retention	79	*	62
		% pass rate	73	*	62
Access to nursing and health studies	3	No. of starts	30	39	44
		% retention	80	82	73
		% pass rate	63	47	59

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

78. Although most teaching was satisfactory, there was some unsatisfactory teaching and much of the teaching was uninspiring. Learning activities do not extend students sufficiently and some level 3 students are not acquiring the appropriate academic skills. Theory is not always linked to workplace practice and teachers fail to promote students' understanding of professional values and practice. Teaching methods rely too much on question and answer techniques and teacher exposition. Students are not always engaged in learning. Activities are rarely modified to meet the needs of individual students and teachers do not make sufficient checks on students' learning.

79. In the best lessons, there is co-operative and productive learning with teachers using questioning to good effect and drawing upon the students' work placement experience. In an access to nursing lesson, the teacher re-phrased students' contributions in different ways, effectively promoting their conceptual development and acquisition of specialist vocabulary. Ethical and professional issues are emphasised in these lessons. On the GNVQ foundation course, teachers effectively use individual learning plans to plan teaching and promote learning.

80. A useful placement handbook helps GNVQ intermediate health and social care students to make the best use of their work placements. Part-time students also have the benefit of work placements. Recently, systems have been introduced for the review and monitoring of the progress

of full-time students. Internal verification systems are satisfactory. There is a comprehensive programme of tutorial activities for the GNVQ foundation course. Staff are appropriately qualified with relevant occupational experience, but some lack recent professional updating. Accommodation and learning resources are generally adequate.

81. The college has improved the recruitment of students from under-represented groups to the NVQ programme in early years. Local community centres provide a good venue for these classes and have childcare facilities. Students receive learning support, ESOL and job-seeking skills as part of the programme. New introductory courses provide a progression route to the NVQ. The GNVQ foundation course effectively meets the needs of young people who may have been excluded from school or have learning difficulties or disabilities. The college is developing links with NHS trusts, but these are not yet fully established.

Leadership and management

82. There is a new management team for the curriculum area, which is still at an early stage of development. Course teams are now familiar with targets for retention and pass rates are monitoring their performance against them. New systems for action planning and target setting have been introduced as part of the tutorial provision and these are being used. Recent appointments have strengthened the liaison between the teaching staff and the learning centre. There is little sharing of good practice across teams and centres. One centre has problems with continuity of staff that has led to delays in establishing an effective team.

Visual and performing arts
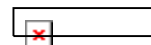
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high standard of creative work

- good teaching and learning

- excellent resources for media and three-dimensional design

- good curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- lack of students' punctuality and poor attendance

- low students' attainment on some courses

- poor retention rate on some GCE A-level courses.

Scope of provision

83. The college offers a wide range of specialist vocational programmes at three centres. These include the BTEC national diploma in drama, popular music, music technology, dance, media graphics, multimedia, photography and fashion and foundation art and design. There are GNVQ foundation and intermediate and AVCE courses in art and design and BTEC first diploma courses in fashion graphics and performing arts. In addition, there are City and Guilds courses in television and video, BTEC foundation and Professional Development Certificate and access to media courses. Short courses at two centres cover art, design, fashion, costume design, multi-media and photography. There is franchised provision in music, radio journalism, and graphics. There are GCE A-level courses in most of the subjects in the vocational provision with the recent addition of film studies. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18 and many progress to HE courses.

Achievement and standards

84. The pass rate for GNVQ art and design, at 33%, is well below the national average. There were 100% pass rates in 2001 on the first diploma in performing arts, the foundation and fine art course, GCE A-level performing arts and the popular music course. There are poor retention rates on several GCE A-level courses and little evidence of consistent improvement in retention rates, with the exception of the first diploma in performing arts. In 2001, retention and pass rates on the two one-year media techniques courses were above the national average.

85. Many students are very satisfied with their courses and value the good range of external links with professional bodies. They appreciate the provision of realistic professional experience in many courses and clearly take pride in their achievements.

86. In a number of lessons, students were not working at an appropriate standard. Insufficient attention was given to the development of their critical skills and students were unable to identify what skills they were gaining. In lessons where high standards of work were observed, there were good examples of students applying their learning and offering mature responses both in written work and discussion. Students' lack of punctuality and attendance disrupts learning on all three college sites.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
First diploma in performing arts	2	No. of starts	20	24	25
		% retention	80	100	100
		% pass rate	81	72	64
National diploma in performing arts	3	No. of starts	89	46	37
		% retention	60	46	74
		% pass rate	96	95	81
National diploma in	3	No. of starts	11	20	16

popular music		% retention	100	80	63
		% pass rate	100	81	100
BTEC national diploma design	3	No. of starts	127	88	72
		% retention	79	57	71
		% pass rate	75	80	91
Foundation art and design	3	No. of starts	85	21	24
		% retention	94	71	81
		% pass rate	81	100	100
GCE A-level fine art	3	No. of starts	21	21	30
		% retention	67	60	43
		% pass rate	100	91	100

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

Quality of education and training

87. Teaching is good or very good on many courses. Most lessons are well prepared and have carefully planned schemes of work. Teachers set students challenging assignments which take account of students' individual learning goals and promote their ability to learn on their own and their personal development. Creative work is particularly strong at the Kentish Town and Regent's Park centres. In a second-year three-dimensional lesson, students designed and skilfully produced models for an exhibition stand for a large trade show. In a first-year diploma performing arts lesson, students improvised a fairground scene to take on tour to local schools. These students displayed a high level of skill and application of drama techniques.

88. There is an effective tutorial system that provides a high level of support to individuals. Effective action planning helps to improve students' performance. A wide range of appropriate assessments is used, and key skills are integrated effectively with assignments. However, assessment results are not used effectively by all staff as a basis for planning teaching and learning.

89. Staff are generally well qualified and many have impressive professional backgrounds and strong links with the commercial world. Professional expertise and vocational relevance are provided by many part-time staff. The equipment in the media suite is of an exceptional standard, but the accommodation for performing arts is shabby. There are three highly qualified technicians at the Regent's Park centre. Art and design resources at the Kentish Town centre are well managed and organised. The three-dimensional workshop is equipped with a full range of materials including specialist resources for work in wood, metal, plastics and ceramics. The IT suites at both centres are well equipped, as is the photography area.

Leadership and management

90. A clear management structure is now in place at the Regent's Park and Kentish Town centres. Fortnightly course and divisional meetings are held and there is effective monitoring of action plans and target setting for students' recruitment, retention and pass rates. In an effort to improve retention rates, there is a programme of open days for students at which they can receive specialist advice and see demonstrations of students' work. New managers are offering effective leadership and support and they are developing clear systems for communicating with staff. A new lesson observation scheme is in place, but links to staff development are not yet formalised.

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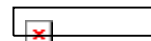
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good retention rates in many subjects

- strong awareness of, and good practice in, equal opportunities in lessons

- good students' progression in relation to their previous educational experience

- good progression to HE by access students

- success in meeting the learning needs of a diverse local community.

Weaknesses

- poor pass rates in many GCE A-level subjects

- some unimaginative teaching

- students' poor attendance

- some inadequate learning resources.

Scope of provision

91. The humanities provision offers a wide range of courses that meet the needs of students from a diverse spectrum of backgrounds and ages. There are seven humanities subjects offered at GCE A level, nine at GCE AS and five GCSE subjects. There is a substantial teacher education and access to HE programme. The college has also pioneered a `pathways to university' programme. This provides an alternative route to HE, for young people other than from GCE A levels. Lessons are held during the early evening as well as in the daytime and later evening. Some students from local schools attend the college to take GCE A-level subjects not offered in their own schools.

Achievement and standards

92. High retention rates, above the national averages for similar colleges, have regularly been achieved in teacher education, access to humanities and GCE A-level government and politics. Students progress well in relation to their previous low attainment. The pass rate in GCE AS history last year was high. Higher pass grades in GCE A levels in history and geography have risen steadily over the past three years to well above national averages. The proportion of higher grades achieved in government and politics has consistently matched the national average. However, pass rates in many GCE A levels have been below national averages. In law and psychology, they have been consistently poor and in GCE A-level government and politics they have declined.

93. Access to HE students produce assignments which show good understanding and effectively relate concepts to practical situations. Written work by GCE A-level students is generally of a satisfactory standard and there are examples of high-quality work. However, some students fail to complete all their coursework within the required timescale. Most marking is detailed and comments indicate how students can improve their performance, though some are cursory and offer insufficient advice on improvement. There is no agreed policy to ensure consistent assessment practices and marking standards across the humanities curriculum area. Many students progress successfully to HE. For many lessons, students are not punctual and attendance is poor.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE social studies	2	No. of starts	16	17	13
		% retention	69	71	77
		% pass rate	73	42	80
City and Guilds 7307 Further and Adult Education Teachers Certificate	3	No. of starts	*	72	77
		% retention	*	96	96
		% pass rate	*	90	85
GCE A-level sociology	3	No. of starts	64	53	63
		% retention	58	77	67
		% pass rate	63	61	58
GCE A-level government and politics	3	No. of starts	71	51	47
		% retention	72	84	85
		% pass rate	60	76	51
GCE A-level history	3	No. of starts	24	16	26
		% retention	75	86	65
		% pass rate	47	60	77
Access to HE humanities	3	No. of starts	102	112	91
		% retention	70	68	79
		% pass rate	83	80	68

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

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

94. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. In the more effective lessons, teachers demonstrated deep understanding of their subjects and devised a variety of effective ways of enabling students to participate actively in their learning. Students work together enthusiastically in pairs and in small groups and make confident presentations to the rest of the class. In a stimulating history lesson about the struggle for civil rights among non African-American minorities in the United States, the teacher successfully motivated students to respond in the light of their own backgrounds. This contributed to lively yet thoughtful debate. Similarly, access students studying government and politics were encouraged to relate their study of electoral systems to those of their countries of origin.

95. In a minority of lessons, there was over-reliance on lecturing, and some students become inattentive. Sometimes teachers set classroom activities that were insufficiently demanding. In some question and answer sessions, teachers allowed the more confident or assertive students to dominate discussions. Overhead projector transparencies are used infrequently and sometimes ineffectively. There is no generally accepted approach throughout the curriculum area to lesson planning and schemes of work.

96. Tutorial support is valued, especially by access to HE students. Teachers advise students well on coursework requirements and on progression to HE. However, in some individual tutorials, action planning is insufficiently developed. Support for students whose first language is not English is well integrated with the programmes for access students and is also provided for other students who need it. Students with dyslexia receive specific support.

97. Humanities teachers are generally well qualified and experienced. Most teachers are now full-time or on fractional contracts. There has been excessive turnover of staff and difficulty in recruiting new staff in law and in psychology. This has affected students' learning adversely. Accommodation is adequate if rather bleak at both major centres. Rooms are often devoid of students' work. There are no lifts to help users of wheelchairs at the Battersea Park or Grays Inn centres. The college has re-located some lessons to the ground floor, but some students are still unable to take their first-choice subjects.

98. The provision of IT for students is good, although at peak periods students cannot always find an available printer. The late opening hours of the learning centres are very helpful to those humanities students who are attending twilight and evening classes. Some learning materials, including handouts, are of poor quality. While book stocks for humanities are ample at Battersea Park Centre, there are inadequacies at Grays Inn Centre.

Leadership and management

99. Curriculum teams are adapting to their revised responsibilities within the college's new management structure. They are building on the existing strengths of the humanities curriculum area and particularly on the excellent equal opportunities awareness and good practice which permeates all aspects of the provision. Many key weaknesses were recognised in the self-assessment report. Inconsistent practice in current tutorial arrangements and individual action planning is to be addressed. Course target setting and the review and the recording of students' progress are not yet implemented effectively in all subjects.

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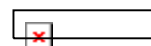
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- effective and stimulating teaching in many lessons

- good retention rates for GCSE English

- wide range of options for GCE A-level English subjects.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance and lack of punctuality

- lack of clarity in the marking of students' work

- some low pass rates in GCE A-level English

- insufficient attention to students' individual needs.

Scope of provision

100. The provision in English consists of GCSE English and English literature. A wide range of subject options are available for GCE A-level English. There is part-time day and evening provision offered in GCE A-level English language, English literature and English language and literature. Students are drawn from full-time academic and vocational courses across the college. GCSE English is offered both as a one-year and two-year course and is designed for students who wish to progress to GCSE following a level 1 qualification.

Achievement and standards

101. Pass rates in GCE A-level English literature have risen steadily over the last three years to above the national average and retention rates in GCSE English are consistently above the national average. However, the pass rate for GCE A-level English language is poor and falling. The grade A* to C pass rate for GCSE English literature is well below the national average.

102. Standards of students' work are mixed. Student's oral work demonstrates good understanding and insight, but some written work is poor. Much of it is undermined by spelling errors and poor grammar and is often poorly expressed. Poor students' attendance and lack of punctuality adversely affects the learning of students who are either disturbed by latecomers or who have missed previous work.

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

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
GCSE English literature	2	No. of starts	30	27	45
		% retention	87	70	68
		% pass rate	71	95	93
GCSE English	2	No. of starts	360	325	328
		% retention	78	75	87
		% pass rate	74	85	73
GCE A-level language and literature (2 year)	3	No. of starts	64	65	72
		% retention	92	70	79
		% pass rate	55	85	73
GCE A-level English language/literature (1 year)	3	No. of starts	65	87	40
		% retention	89	77	80
		% pass rate	54	66	72
GCE A-level English literature (2 year)	3	No. of starts	18	45	27
		% retention	94	68	70
		% pass rate	70	83	95

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

Quality of education and training

103. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. Teachers provide stimulating and knowledgeable lessons and ensure that students engage in discussion and tasks. There is good rapport between teachers and students. In one GCE A-level English language and literature lesson, students' work was used as a model answer for other students to consider and analyse. This approach stimulated high levels of motivation and involvement amongst the students.

104. Common schemes of work are in place for GCSE English subjects and these ensure that the syllabus is covered fully by all groups. Schemes of work are comprehensive, but they do not take sufficient account of the individual needs or learning styles of students. Although basic language skills are included in some lesson plans, the teaching is on a whole-class basis and the individual needs of many students are not adequately addressed, nor is the wide difference in their abilities. Planning of GCE A-level work is carried out thoroughly and systematically across the provision. Syllabuses are selected to suit the backgrounds and interests of students at the college.

105. Students' work is marked and turned around quickly. Comments are usually supportive and constructive, although they do not always include feedback on writing skills. There is a disparity in grading across the provision. This is confusing for students, some of whom are unsure of the exact worth of their work after it has been marked. In the marking of coursework, national criteria are insufficiently used to inform students of what is required.

106. There is no initial diagnostic assessment of English students to establish if they have any specific needs, although screening for additional learning support and ESOL/EFL is part of the induction programme for all full-time students. Full-time students have satisfactory tutorial support. However, induction for part-time evening class students is inadequate, with insufficient information being given on college services such as the learning centres.

107. Teachers are well qualified and experienced though not all have training in the particular aspect of the English curriculum they are teaching. Classrooms are adequately furnished, although

little student work is displayed. Access to English classrooms is restricted as they are all on upper floors with no lift. Resources are adequate and although overhead projectors were provided in classrooms, they were not used sufficiently. Teaching and learning materials are rarely designed to meet the wide range of students' needs in a lesson.

Leadership and management

108. Some of the new management strategies, such as the introduction of regular curriculum team meetings, are welcomed by staff. Managers give clear guidance. However, the overall co-ordination of English courses at the college is not clear. There is little delegated course responsibility, which has led to a lack of improvement by course teams and a lack of innovation or development. Equal opportunities are addressed in terms of groups, but individual needs are not always addressed.

English as a foreign language and modern languages
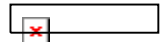
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good curriculum teamwork at individual centres

- strong individual support for students

- good development of students' oral skills

- high retention rates on many courses.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on many courses

- little use of IT for teaching and learning

- little use of learning materials.

Scope of provision

109. The college offers a comprehensive range of courses. At present, there are 2,569 students enrolled on EFL courses, of which 109 are aged 16 to 18 and 2,460 are 19 and over. A further 546 students are enrolled on modern foreign language courses, of which 111 are aged 16 to 18 and 435 are adults. Over 95% of all of these students are part time. The courses attract students from a wide range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and run at various levels. There are good opportunities for progression for many students.

Achievement and standards

110. Retention rates are high in many courses across the provision and have improved over the past three years. Many pass rates on courses across the provision are low. These include GCE A level, GCSE and Certificate in Business Language Competence examinations in modern languages and some First Certificate in English, English for Business and Key English Test examinations. A number of adults who completed courses chose not to take the final examination and this has lowered some pass rates.

111. The standard of attainment in lessons was at least satisfactory and in a number of lessons was good. Most students demonstrate good comprehension and oral skills and were able to communicate effectively in the language being learned. They confidently manipulate language structures for effective communication and contribute well to discussions. Many students are more proficient in oral work than in written.

112. Students' poor attendance and lack of punctuality is not always addressed by teachers.

A sample of retention and pass rates in English as a foreign language and modern languages, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Key English test	entry	No. of starts	403	346	378
		% retention	91	84	85
		% pass rate	28	57	59
GOALS award (Bronze) in Japanese	entry	No. of starts	30	15	16
		% retention	70	100	62
		% pass rate	52	73	70
GCSE Spanish	2	No. of starts	65	65	57
		% retention	74	74	95
		% pass rate	52	60	18
First certificate in English 1 year	2	No. of starts	458	177	65
		% retention	67	72	91
		% pass rate	61	72	41
Certificate in advanced English	3	No. of starts	416	330	371
		% retention	91	92	94
		% pass rate	51	51	56

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

Quality of education and training

113. Teaching was effective in almost all of the lessons observed and inspectors graded over 61% as good or better. Most teachers are well qualified and demonstrate good subject knowledge. Many teachers of modern foreign languages are native speakers and in teaching most make good use of the language being learned. Students are well motivated, have a clear idea of what they need to do to succeed and many plan to progress to higher level courses. Most students have good oral skills and can communicate effectively in the language they are learning.

114. In the best lessons, teachers stimulate and challenge students with a range of fast-moving activities and authentic materials that effectively integrate the teaching of grammar in a relevant context. For example, in an EFL lesson, students practised the oral use of the conditional tense through a variety of stimulating and demanding activities. These included an amusing group card game requiring students to offer advice to each other on contemporary problems. In a GCSE language lesson based on formal letter writing, a model letter was produced as a result of a process in which all students were encouraged to contribute ideas and phrases. This skilfully integrated oral skills, cultural issues and points of grammar.

115. Some teaching is uninspiring and the pace of learning slow. There is little use of IT across the provision for the preparation of teaching materials. Students have good IT facilities available to them, but they are not encouraged to make full use of them for research and written work. There is insufficient use of an appropriate range of learning materials in many lessons and an over-reliance on textbook materials. These often lack topical and cultural context and limit students' linguistic experiences.

116. A wide range of specialist resources is available across the provision. There is a well-maintained language laboratory, although there are no drop-in facilities to allow students to learn on their own. Most accommodation is suitable for language teaching, but there is no access for students with restricted mobility. All teachers have the opportunity to undertake staff development and many take advantage of this.

117. All students are assessed on entry to courses and their progress is regularly monitored and reviewed. Students receive good individual support in lessons that takes account of their individual learning needs. Homework is set regularly for all courses, marked and returned with helpful feedback to encourage students to improve their performance.

Leadership and management

118. The college has recently re-organised its management structure and it is too early to judge its effectiveness at curriculum level. Curriculum teamwork and co-ordination at individual centres is good and staff work well together to ensure effective course teaching, and that support is provided for students. Permanent and agency staff attend regular team meetings and address key issues relating to teaching and learning and curriculum review. There is also good e-mail contact for all staff. Management information data are used effectively to compare achievements with national averages and to set targets. Most schemes of work are comprehensive and lessons are well planned. There is no systematic process for the sharing of good practice and teaching materials.

English for speakers of other languages
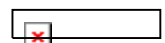
Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- good teaching and learning on 16 to 19 and adult intensive programmes

- good use of IT to promote language development

- good achievement on Pitman qualifications.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance and lack of punctuality on most courses

- narrow curriculum range offering few opportunities for progression to externally accredited and vocational courses

- inadequate development of communicative oral skills

- insufficient support to meet students' needs.

Scope of provision

119. The college offers full-time and part-time day and evening courses at entry level and level 1 at six centres. Courses are mostly designed for adults, but there is a small foundation ESOL group of 312 students aged 16 to 19 at the Grays Inn and Battersea Park centres. Provision is based on the main centres and in community-based centres. In the current year, there are 3,960 students on ESOL programmes, two thirds of whom are located at Castle Lane and Peter Street centres and one third at Battersea Park, Grays Inn, Kentish Town, Regents Park and community centres.

Achievement and standards

120. There is good achievement on some Pitmans courses at entry level, but some retention rates are unsatisfactory. The number of courses for Open College Network (OCN) qualifications has been significantly reduced in the last two years. The entry level curriculum at Castle Lane and Peter Street centres consists of courses that are related to the national core curriculum. However, these courses do not have external accreditation and students have no opportunities to obtain additional external qualifications. Progression opportunities to language courses at level 2 are limited to EFL qualifications. A Skillsway course taught on other sites is accredited with OCN units as an additional qualification. Information on students' destinations is not available from staff at any of the college centres.

121. Course team action plans have had little effect in improving retention and pass rates. There is poor attendance and very late arrival in classes, up to one hour in some instances, on many

courses. The lack of punctuality was not questioned by teachers and it was identified by students as a disruptive factor in their learning. Attendance at lessons observed during the inspection was 57%.

122. Students gain confidence during their programmes, work well together and are highly motivated. Though good standards are set in many lessons, the wide range of students' abilities in the classes and the lack of individual support mean that attainment is only just satisfactory for many students. An attractive newsletter, widely distributed to students, includes information updates and celebrates students' achievements with samples of students' own writing and views.

123. Given the high number of non-externally accredited courses, assessment and internal verification processes are inadequate. The correction of verbal and written errors is not carried out consistently, especially at entry level. A significant number of students do not receive an assessment of their progress and are not given constructive advice on how to improve their language skills. The narrow focus of the ESOL curriculum does not facilitate progression for learners into vocational areas or to GCSE English.

Quality of education and training

124. Most teaching is satisfactory or better in ESOL. However, the proportion of good teaching observed was not high, and 18% of lessons were less than satisfactory. There is good teaching and learning on 16 to 19 programmes and the adult intensive programme at Regents Park. Schemes of work are thorough and many are related to the national curriculum. Teachers share clear objectives with students and some tutors effectively correct language errors as part of whole class activity. In these lessons, there are good examples of teachers setting appropriate learning activities designed to engage students. A text with pictures of the Potters Bar rail crash was effectively used with an elementary group. Skimming and scanning activities of a concert programme included discussion about what to expect of such an event that raised inter-cultural awareness. There is good use of IT to promote language development at some centres and, in one session of computer-assisted language learning, students developed web pages and PowerPoint presentations about their countries of origin.

125. Much teaching fails to take sufficient account of individual learning needs. The materials used for more advanced students are not demanding enough and some students do not have enough opportunity to consolidate language skills nor to work at their own pace. There are insufficient opportunities for learners to develop oral communication skills. Many teachers put a heavy emphasis on pronunciation practice, at the expense of developing fluency in communicative contexts relevant to students' needs. There is inadequate use of real life and vocational materials. For example, European Union migrant workers do not benefit from vocational input in their language development. Individual learning plans are not sufficiently detailed and reviews tend to be evaluative rather than leading to on-going development and action planning.

126. Initial advice and guidance is not consistently good. Some students benefit from detailed and careful diagnostic assessment whilst others receive little assessment. New students, arriving midway through a course, receive an inadequate initial assessment. Language development support is available for students with additional literacy needs on some ESOL courses. There is a lack of suitable advice and support for new arrivals and refugees. Some links between student services staff and the ESOL curriculum teams are developing, but when students are referred to student services, the outcome is not always monitored.

127. Accommodation is generally adequate though some teaching rooms are too small, contain few wall displays and do not provide an effective setting for developing communication skills.

Leadership and management

128. Provision for pre-vocational intensive ESOL programmes for students aged 16 to 19 is well managed. The college has a basic skills strategy group that is planning a more accessible ESOL curriculum. This will enable all students to undertake courses appropriate to their level. Currently, the provision is taught at many centres, and there is little sharing of good practice across the

different ESOL teams. There is poor access to appropriate data on which to base course planning and target setting and individual learning plans are not used in course planning. Some examples of good curriculum management are found in specific centres. Systems for recording students' progress and achievement on internally accredited courses are not thorough enough. Insufficient monitoring of departmental policies has led to inadequate implementation of targets and action plans to raise retention and pass rates.

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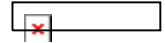
Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- well-organised and lively teaching

- good development of students' skills

- effective leadership and management

- good community provision.

Weaknesses

- insufficient vocational courses at entry level

- lack of systematic initial assessment to inform individual target setting

- shortage of specialist equipment and trained staff.

Scope of provision

129. The college offers a full-time and part-time fresh start programme for 60 adults at one main centre. Part-time courses for a further 250 to 300 adults are run at a smaller centre. Community-based provision, which is in partnership with the local authority, caters for 150 adults, who work towards Wordpower qualifications. Students on college centres work towards OCN basic skills

accreditation or a college certificate. The programme offered to adults has reduced over the past three years as other providers have started working in this curriculum area. There is little evening provision. There are no vocational courses at entry level for students aged 16 to 18 or for adults. An innovative programme of Neighbourhood Learning, run in partnership with the LEA, is developing provision for otherwise excluded learners. The college is working in partnership with the NHS to offer training in work-based basic skills.

Achievement and standards

130. Retention rates are in line with, or above, national averages. Additional learning support for students on vocational courses has led to substantial improvements in retention and pass rates. The college has not disaggregated the pass rates for basic skills courses. It is not possible to compare the achievement of basic skills students separately from those of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language and are taking ESOL courses.

131. There are satisfactory standards of students' work. Students make good progress in developing reading, writing and numeracy skills. They become confident learners and develop personal skills. Students actively participate in their learning and report high levels of satisfaction. There is good progression to other college courses. Of the 247 former basic skills students continuing at the college in 2001/02, 57% progressed on to GNVQ, NVQ, GCSE, vocational ICT and other accredited courses.

Quality of education and training

132. Most teaching is well organised and lively. Courses are designed to meet students' needs and interests. In the best lessons, the experience of the students themselves is used to structure the students' learning. For example, in a numeracy lesson, the mean, median and mode were explained using data that students had supplied about their children. Oral work is used to introduce or develop written work and there is much use of humour to enliven learning. Computers are available in most classrooms, but are not used sufficiently. Some teachers underestimate the difficulty of tasks set for students, notably in the teaching of grammar. Students are effective learners, ready to help and learn from each other. They contribute freely to lessons and are ready to risk failure in new areas of learning. Teachers regularly check students' learning during lessons and support sessions.

133. Initial assessment is not systematic and some students have difficulty in obtaining specialist advice. Individual learning plans are generally thorough, but some individual targets are not detailed enough to enable accurate measurement of students' progress. Not all students have regular reviews of progress.

134. Assessments of students' learning needs for additional learning support takes a variety of forms. There are written recommendations for main course teachers, which suggest teaching and learning methods, but these do not always reach the main course teacher. Regular documented reviews of students' progress in additional learning support for main course teachers are not always carried out. Additional learning support for literacy, numeracy and dyslexia is available on a drop-in basis, by appointment or in lessons. The same level of support is not available to all students in the college. Dyslexia support is good, but limited by shortages of specialist staff. Additional learning support staff are working to develop experience in working with students who have a variety of disabilities.

135. Full-time teachers are well qualified and experienced, but, though there have been eight recent appointments, there still remains a shortage of specialist basic skills staff to consolidate and expand provision. Agency teachers generally have fewer specialist qualifications. Teaching rooms at one centre are well decorated, but too small to accommodate larger groups. At other centres, rooms are larger, but they are not used for basic skills lessons only and lack relevant stimulating displays. There are two well-resourced study support centres that are being used as models for development at other college centres. The additional learning support service lacks the IT hardware and specialist software needed to cater for students with sensory impairments.

Leadership and management

136. There is good leadership. Recent changes in management have the full support of staff, who welcome the increased emphasis on widening participation. The college recognises the strategic importance of basic skills in meeting its mission and a thorough review of all aspects of the college's provision clearly informs the college's basic skills strategy. Lesson observations are concentrating on improving teaching and learning though these are not yet sufficiently thorough. Communications are improving with regular newsletters and updates on progress to staff. The college leads on a Central London Learning Partnership project to recruit and train teachers of basic skills to address the London-wide shortage of qualified staff.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
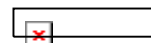
Overall provision in this area is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- effective teaching on accredited courses

- good development of students personal and social skills

- good variety in entry and level 1 programmes.

Weaknesses

- inadequate review of individual learning

- inappropriate emphasis on behaviour management in many lessons

- ineffective use of support staff

- insufficient opportunities for progression.

Scope of provision

137. The college offers full-time and part-time programmes at entry and level 1 for students with moderate learning difficulties and for students with disabilities. Courses largely recruit adults. Many of the courses for students with severe learning disabilities are provided in partnership with the local authority. An accredited programme for students aged 16 to 19 includes key skills and vocational options. Much of the provision is based at college centres. Currently there are 328 students on accredited and college certificate courses including 80 students on programmes that are externally accredited through courses. These programmes include basic skill units in IT, numeracy and literacy. The college has established a partnership with Swiss Cottage School. This has increased the participation of students aged 16 to 18. The recent closure of a local private training provider reduced the college's provision in this curriculum area, as promotion and recruitment of students are closely linked to work with external agencies.

Achievement and standards

138. Retention rates for students with learning disabilities and difficulties are satisfactory. Individual students' records show adequate levels of achievement. Students on accredited programmes have gained self-confidence, self-esteem and developed negotiation skills. Their work is satisfactory. The quality of students' portfolios is reasonable. There are some examples of good project work in the practical vocational areas. Many students have received college certificates that are annually presented at award celebrations.

139. There is some good progression for students from the accredited programmes. Some 25 students from the 16 to 18 entry foundation programme have moved on to vocational courses across the college. Students on an IT course for partially sighted and blind students have little access to specialist resources in the college-wide programmes. Many students on the non-accredited programmes have few opportunities to progress to higher level courses.

Quality of education and training

140. Teaching is effective on accredited programmes. There is a good variety of entry and level 1 programmes. Lessons include basic skills and practical learning based on realistic situations. Students have good opportunities to develop personal and social skills in the practical sessions. These include media skills, cooking and gardening. One group of learners produced a London guidebook for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The students in these lessons are motivated and encouraged to work independently so developing their confidence. Teachers and students at the end of these lessons evaluate the learning that has taken place and plan for the next stage. Students are able to practise basic skills as they budget for a meal, plan gardening or design video footage. The competences achieved are recorded in personal work files. Lessons are planned to build on students' existing communication skills and interests in vocational courses and to take account of students' individual needs. Students on full-time programmes have personal tutorials. Students have opportunities to participate in gender awareness sessions.

141. However, no very good or outstanding lessons were observed and there was too much unsatisfactory teaching. A significant number of lesson plans concentrate on students' behaviour rather than on learning and achievement. As a result, many students do not participate sufficiently in the learning tasks set and adopt passive roles. Teachers do not encourage all students to contribute in lessons. Often there is too much emphasis on learning outcomes rather than the process of learning and students are not given sufficiently demanding tasks to complete. Reviews of learning are irregular and not developed adequately to support monitoring, target setting and evaluation of learning. Support staff are not used effectively in some lessons. Teachers and support staff are not always clear about their respective roles and fail to develop a collaborative approach in lessons.

142. There is a comprehensive initial assessment process that identifies students' individual learning needs. This includes an initial interview with the tutor and a carer to assess physical and learning ability. However, many of the materials used for initial assessment are outdated.

143. Learning resources and materials are poor. They fail to reflect the cultural diversity of the college's students and many are out of date. The college has produced an information booklet on

the needs of people with learning disabilities. The college's commitment to ensure effective support for students is limited by lack of specialist resources, including too few qualified staff and too little equipment. The accommodation in the classroom in most centres is adequate. There is no risk assessment of IT facilities for the classroom for visually impaired students.

Leadership and management

144. A new management structure is slowly making an impact on the quality of provision. Communication between staff at different centres is improving though the lack of reliable data on students' achievements limits the extent to which staff can set targets and monitor and improve performance. Teachers and support staff are not clear about their respective roles. There are considerable differences in the quality, content, format and emphasis on learning, in schemes of work and lesson plans. The good practice that is found in individual target setting for some students is not shared across the curriculum area.
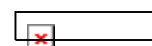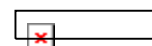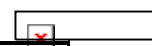
Part D: College data

Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age

Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	11	17
2	27	24
3	50	17
4/5	0	2
Other	12	40
Total	**100**	**100**

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001.

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age

Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments %
Science	20	80	19
Agriculture	0	100	0
Construction	0	100	1
Engineering	10	90	1

Business	46	54	7
Hotel and catering	49	51	12
Health and community care	27	73	5
Art and design	44	56	6
Humanities	33	67	27
Basic education	6	94	22
Total	**235**	**765**	**100**

Source: Provided by the college in spring 2001.

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000	1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000
1	Starters excluding transfers	316	519	589	2,447	1,651	2,299
	Retention rate (%)	70	74	78	71	75	66
	National average (%)	77	74	76	76	73	76
	Pass rate (%)	34	59	73	46	50	50
	National average (%)	49	59	64	55	58	66
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,506	1,648	1,849	2,195	2,504	2,036
	Retention rate (%)	75	73	79	75	70	78
	National average (%)	75	72	73	76	75	75
	Pass rate (%)	65	63	68	52	56	58
	National average (%)	57	65	69	57	63	66
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,119	2,051	1,848	3,107	3,043	2,102
	Retention rate (%)	75	74	78	75	76	77
	National average (%)	77	73	75	76	75	75
	Pass rate (%)	59	61	62	53	55	56
	National average (%)	59	64	65	58	63	66
4	Starters excluding transfers	9	3	3	697	574	429
	Retention rate (%)	67	*	*	77	69	58
	National average (%)	**	**	**	81	78	76

	Pass rate (%)	50	*	*	39	34	48
	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/tertiary colleges or sixth form colleges).

Sources of information:

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

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

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

* too few students to provide a valid calculation

** data unavailable

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

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	54	24	22	95
Level 2 (intermediate)	56	28	16	69
Level 1 (foundation)	61	35	4	28
Other sessions	53	35	12	49
Totals	**55**	**29**	**16**	**241**

School inspection reports are available on the OFSTED website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).