

RE-INSPECTION MONITORING OF GREENWICH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection Monitoring

The overall provision in the curriculum area of science and mathematics is now **satisfactory**

Background

Greenwich Community College was inspected in October 2001. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory in all areas inspected, except in science and mathematics, which was found to be unsatisfactory.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning (WBL) areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or that leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory provision in any curriculum or WBL area, or less than satisfactory leadership and management, Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the unsatisfactory areas.

As a result of the monitoring inspections, inspectors may judge that the curriculum or WBL areas, or leadership and management are satisfactory and that no further visits are required. If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that the curriculum or WBL area or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grade for the area that continues to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection within the cycle. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and the reasons why.

Date of the Re-Inspection Monitoring Visits

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection monitoring visits of science and mathematics took place on 9 May 2002, 3 and 4 December 2002, 26 and 27 February 2003 and, 15 and 16 October 2003.

Science and Mathematics

In the October 2001 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- Regular setting and effective marking of homework
- Good support for individual students through science workshops
- Effective use of it in science lessons
- Strong technical support in science lessons.

Weaknesses

- Much unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics
- Poor retention rates on GCE A-level science and mathematics
- Low pass rates on many courses
- Inadequate action to improve the quality of teaching.

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judged that good progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

Pass and retention rates for science and mathematics courses have much improved since the previous inspection. Many of the college's students have low levels of prior attainment on joining their course, yet success rates for most subjects are now comparable to national averages. All students joining the GCE A2 chemistry course in 2002 and 2003 completed the course successfully.

Many subjects have shown an increase in retention rates. A number of actions by college staff have contributed to this improvement. When learners first join a mathematics or science course they are given a rigorous initial assessment, to ensure that they are placed on the appropriate level of course. Additional courses are now available in mathematics, for learners not ready to take the intermediary or higher GCSE mathematics qualification. The attendance of students is carefully monitored through class registers and a student tracking and retention officer has been appointed to follow up the reasons for students' absence. However, a lack of punctuality and low students' attendance is still an issue in many lessons.

The quality of teaching in mathematics has improved considerably since the full inspection. Most of the teaching observed during the final monitoring visit was good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Mathematics teachers cover a wider range of more effective activities in lessons. There is a better match of teaching to the ability range of learners, although in a few lessons the more able students require more demanding work. Teachers explain technical terms, which may be new to students, clearly and use suitable examples to illustrate the points they are making. Students are encouraged to work together productively. Teachers provide a high level of individual support to students. ICT is now used effectively, although only in a small proportion of lessons.

College staff now carry out suitable actions to improve the quality of teaching. The new management structure has focused staff on working together as a team and the area has been well led. There are regular team meetings, where issues relevant to teaching and learning are discussed. Lesson observations are carried out by managers and peers, and the feedback given to teachers is constructive and evaluative. Visits to several other colleges have taken place to share good practice. Staff development activities are relevant and aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning. However, the college has been slow to use value added measurements that take account of the prior attainment and subsequent progress made by students. Teachers set individual targets for students, but they consist of very general statements and do not provide specific actions to help students to improve the standard of their work.