

RE-INSPECTION OF HARROW COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection

The provision in the curriculum areas of mathematics and health, social care and early years is now **satisfactory**.

Background

Harrow College was inspected in January 2002. 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 mathematics and health, social care and early years, which were 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 re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that the curriculum or WBL areas, or leadership and management are satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, all unsatisfactory provision will be re-inspected normally during one week.

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.

Dates of Re-Inspection Monitoring Visits

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection monitoring visits of mathematics and health, social care and early years took place on 17-18 September 2002, 28-29 January 2003 and 13-15 January 2004.

Mathematics

In the January 2002 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

- good individual and additional support to students
- good recognition of the language problems of some students.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory pass rates in GCE A-level mathematics
- low levels of attainment in many mathematics lessons
- inadequate planning and teaching of lessons
- unsatisfactory course management.

Following the monitoring inspections, inspectors judged that progress had been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area was now **satisfactory**.

There has been an improvement in the pass rates for A-level mathematics since the last inspection. The pass rate has risen to national average level, while retention has increased. In A-level further mathematics, taken by a small number of students, both retention and pass rates were high in 2003. Students' attainment is good. Through appropriate coursework, students are developing mathematical skills and concepts appropriate to their level of study. To address concerns over the attainment of those students with less than a grade D at GCSE, some students are now taking free standing mathematics units at level 1. New teaching approaches have been introduced successfully to improve attainment in A-level mathematics.

Good progress has been made to improve teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and the best lessons involve all the students in discussion of theory and problem- solving. Students speak positively of the high standard of teaching and support. Course management has improved across the two main college sites. Staff share schemes of work and pool their ideas on how best to teach specific topics. Effective staff development has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Some weaknesses remain, however. Schemes of work are incomplete and there is little reference in most of them to the use of ILT, since there is insufficient direct access to ILT facilities for the teaching of mathematics. Achievement for GCSE mathematics is below the national average and there has been no improvement in pass rates over the last three years, although the retention rate has been maintained at a consistently high level.

Although leadership and management have improved since the last inspection, self-assessment is still not rigorous enough and actions to support weaknesses are too vague. There is little analysis, for example, of why GCSE students in some groups have higher pass rates than others.

Health, social care and early years

In the January 2002 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

- high pass rates on NVQ level 2 early years courses
- thorough assessment and progress reviews
- effective tutorial support.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on many courses
- very low rates of completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- high staff turnover which has disrupted students' learning
- insufficient work experience for full-time students aged 16 to 18
- unsatisfactory leadership and management.

Following the monitoring inspections, inspectors judged that progress had been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area was now **satisfactory**.

Pass rates on all courses have improved since the last inspection. Pass rates for NVQ in care at

level 2 were excellent in both 2002 and 2003. There have been improvements in pass rates on the NVQ in early years' care and education at levels 2 and 3, as well as on the AVCE in health and social care. However, completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks remains poor. The quality of teaching has improved. Most is good or better and some is outstanding. Full-time students now undertake work placements.

A stable teaching team, led by a newly appointed assistant head of department, is working together effectively to improve teaching and learning. The new members of the teaching team are well qualified, with appropriate vocational experience. Leadership and management of the curriculum area have improved. The team is more focused on students' achievement and assignments have been re-designed. Students' progress is tracked effectively and students' targets are discussed at course review meetings and in tutorials. Course reviews are still not completed in sufficient depth, however. In some reviews, weaknesses are identified without any action plan to address them.

There will be no further monitoring visits of the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory areas.

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