



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## RE-INSPECTION OF HALTON COLLEGE

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### OUTCOME OF RE-INSPECTION

The overall provision in science and mathematics is now **satisfactory**; in engineering, manufacturing and technology it is now **satisfactory**; in art and design it is now **satisfactory**; and in literacy and numeracy it is now **satisfactory**.

### BACKGROUND

Halton College was inspected in November 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 or better in all areas inspected, except in science and mathematics, in engineering, in technology and manufacturing, in art and design, and in literacy and numeracy 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 where leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory leadership and management, or less than satisfactory provision in solely WBL, inspectors from Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the less than satisfactory areas. As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that previously less than satisfactory areas of provision, or leadership and management, are now satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, but there is curriculum provision that is less than satisfactory, there will be no monitoring visits. All less than satisfactory provision will be re-inspected, normally during one week, within two years of the original inspection.

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**

In accordance with the above procedures, monitoring visits of science and mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and technology, art and design, and literacy and numeracy took place on 3 and 4 June 2003. The re-inspection of science and mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and technology, art and design, and literacy and numeracy took place on 1 to 5 November 2004.

## **SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS**

In the November 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 teaching on the access course
- Success of many access course students in progressing to HE
- Some very good specialist resources.

### **Weaknesses**

- Low pass rates on GCSE science courses
- Low retention rates on GCE AS science and mathematics courses
- Inappropriate provision at level 2 in science for students aged 16 to 18.

The low pass rates on GCSE modular science have improved. GCE AS science and mathematics courses have been discontinued and replaced by Access qualifications. Retention is still low on GCSE mathematics and Access mathematics. Many Access course students progress successfully to higher education. There was unsatisfactory attendance for some lessons inspected, and registers demonstrated consistently poor attendance for a few classes.

The proportion of good and very good teaching in lessons inspected was average for the area of learning, whereas the proportion for learning was 10% below that average. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, learning or attainment. Some good teaching was observed on all Access courses. In some cases, the late arrival of individual students inhibited learning. Some students missed instructions or safety briefings. There are some deficiencies in marking of students' work and comments by teachers on the standards of work.

There are some very good specialist resources for science, but there are some minor equipment shortages at both sites. A modified curriculum at level 2 now gives 16-18 year old students access to qualifications that are more appropriate to their learning needs. Additional support for students' attainment and learning has been put in place and is now satisfactory.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

In the November 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 achievement and retention in work-based learning
- Excellent work-based learning programme

- Good links with schools and industry
- Good linking of industrial practice with theory in lessons.

### **Weaknesses**

- Low retention rates on college-based courses
- Low pass rates on college-based courses in 2001/02
- Narrow range of programmes
- Poor teaching of key skills
- Insufficient checks on students' understanding and progress in lessons
- Poor health and safety practices in the motor vehicle workshop.

Pass rates for NVQ 1 performing engineering operations and NVQ 2 motor vehicle mechanical/electrical systems are excellent. Other pass rates are at least satisfactory with the exception of NVQ 2 performing engineering operations which is significantly below the national average. Retention rates are improving, but there is poor retention on NVQ 2 motor vehicle mechanical/electrical systems and motor vehicle repair and maintenance. There is poor attendance on NVQ 1 performing engineering operations.

Teaching was at least satisfactory in the lessons inspected, but the proportion of lessons graded good and very good was significantly below the area of learning average. There is effective questioning of students to check learning, but in a minority of lessons not all of the students were involved. There is good development of practical skills. The teaching of key skills is now satisfactory. Teachers pay good attention to health and safety in the workshops. There is ineffective planning of some lessons.

There are continued good links with local schools for whom the college is delivering some engineering courses. The range of courses has been extended to include entry level motor vehicle and a level 1 general engineering programme. This enables students to undertake more appropriate qualifications. There is insufficient industrial updating experience for teachers.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

In the November 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**

- Effective widening of participation through a broad range of provision
- Excellent accommodation and facilities.

### **Weaknesses**

- Poor attendance on some programmes
- Low retention and pass rates on most programmes.

Retention rates on most courses have improved and are above the national average. Pass rates on some programmes continue to be unsatisfactory. Pass rates are declining on the BTEC First Diploma in Music Technology, and the National Diplomas in Design and Performing Arts. The standard of students' work is generally good but on some courses attainment is unsatisfactory. Punctuality in the lessons inspected was good and the attendance was satisfactory.

The standard of teaching is satisfactory or better but the proportion of less than satisfactory learning and attainment is significantly higher than the average for the area of learning. Some teachers talked

for a long time while students lost concentration, or they worked with a small group of students to the detriment of others. Students have an initial literacy and numeracy assessment and in many lessons the learning activities are effectively differentiated as a result of this. Assessment is thoroughly planned and students are aware of timescales. Assessment criteria and feedback are informative and detailed.

There is effective curriculum management and staff feel well-informed and involved. Good practice is shared effectively through team meetings and through the college Intranet. Teaching accommodation and facilities remain excellent. The range of programmes is satisfactory.

## **LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

In the December 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 retention and pass rates for City and Guilds communication courses
- Good partnership arrangements to widen participation
- Effective use of IT in adult basic literacy classes
- Well-managed use of volunteer tutors.

### **Weaknesses**

- Low retention rates on basic English and mathematics courses
- Inadequate use of individual learning plans to meet learning needs
- Insufficient planning of lessons to meet all students' needs
- Little monitoring of students' progress and achievements in lessons
- No coherent policy and strategy for basic skills
- Inadequate arrangements for helping full-time students improve their literacy and numeracy.

Retention has improved across the curriculum area and the rates for some courses are now good. The retention rate for basic numeracy level 2 courses in 2003/04 was 90%, and for level 1 it was 95%. For literacy in the same year, the retention rates were 77% for level 2 and 81% at level 1. Achievement rates are high. Attendance at the lessons inspected was satisfactory at 79%. Punctuality at lessons is poor.

The proportion of better than satisfactory grades for teaching, learning and attainment was significantly below the average for the area of learning. Some lessons were unsatisfactory. Teachers make frequent checks on students' understanding, but some do not set clear learning objectives, provide sufficient explanation of rules for grammar or arithmetic, or consolidate learning adequately. Some lessons inspected had a lack of variety of teaching methods, insufficient challenge for students and inadequate differentiation.

There are thorough arrangements for initial and diagnostic assessment and for planning individual learning. The outcomes from assessment are used effectively in learning plans. Appropriate learning targets are set and reviewed. The arrangements for supporting full-time students to improve their literacy and numeracy are now satisfactory. An effective Skills for Life strategy is being implemented across the college, and curriculum management is good. ESOL provision has been discontinued since the last inspection.

There will be no further re-inspection of the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory/very weak areas.

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