

## **RE-INSPECTION OF NORTH WEST KENT COLLEGE**

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### **OUTCOME OF RE-INSPECTION**

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

### **BACKGROUND**

North West Kent 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 which was found to be less than satisfactory.

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, re-inspection of science and mathematics took place during the week 15 to 18 November 2004.

### **Science and mathematics**

In the November 2002 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be very weak. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

#### **Strengths**

- Good technical support in science

#### **Weaknesses**

- Low pass rates on GCE AS and A-level courses
- Poor retention on GCE AS courses
- Declining recruitment and poor internal progression on all courses
- Poor standard of learning in mathematics

- Inadequate resources for teaching and learning
- No use of ILT by students
- Inadequate leadership and management

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

Pass rates are high and exceed national averages on the present courses for GCSE mathematics and Access to Health and Nursing. A-level provision was discontinued in 2004 because of declining enrolments. The pass rates for the final cohort of GCE A2 learners in 2004 were above national averages, though numbers of students were very low.

The retention rate has improved across all current courses. It is now close to national averages for GCSE mathematics and 25% above for the Access course. In-year retention rates and internal progression to the second year of the AVCE applied science course have also improved. All students on the first year of the course in 2003/04 progressed to the second year of the course. Two new vocational courses in AVCE applied science and Access to Nursing and Health Studies were introduced in 2003. Recruitment to these courses has increased by 40% and 70% respectively from 2003/04 to 2004/05

The quality of teaching and learning in science has improved. Overall, all teaching is now satisfactory or better. Good lessons are well structured and teachers use a range of effective activities, materials and equipment to stimulate learning. Good question and answer sessions promote discussion and conceptual development and check students' understanding. Students develop effective analytical skills and learn to evaluate data and information. Attainment in mathematics has also improved. Students demonstrated good understanding and use of statistical processes in observed lessons. Lesson planning has also improved. Schemes of work are comprehensive but do not generally include details of teaching strategies. There is still insufficient planning to address the needs of all learners in lessons. For example, in poorer lessons students who have completed tasks remain inactive whilst others struggle to catch up. Other lessons offer a limited variety of activities and the resulting monotonous pace slows down learning.

Science and mathematics courses were relocated into new accommodation in 2003. The science laboratories are now well equipped with stimulating subject-specific displays on walls. A dedicated mathematics room has been created, complete with computer access and specialist software. The college library holds a range of text books appropriate for science and mathematics courses. Students also have appropriate access to IT facilities through a science and mathematics drop-in computer workshop area and they make good use of IT for research and the production of assignments.

Leadership and management of the area are now satisfactory. The appointment of a new head of school and new management initiatives have had a positive impact on standards, guiding and supporting tutors to raise achievements. Team leaders for science and mathematics effectively co-ordinate curriculum activities and developments. Extensive staff development has included working closely with outside consultants and other external bodies to improve teaching and learning. Targets are set and monitored by course teams for attendance, retention and achievement. Sharing of good practice occurs informally within teams, but formal systems are not yet in place to ensure that good practice is shared more widely.

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