

# Harrow College

## Inspection report

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Name of lead inspector: Janet Mercer HMI

Last day of inspection: 9 October 2009

Type of provider: General Further Education College

Address: Harrow Weald Campus  
Brookshill  
Harrow Weald  
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## Information about the provider

1. Harrow College is a medium-sized further education college, operating on two main sites in central Harrow and Harrow Weald, and approximately 30 outreach and community-based venues. It provides academic and vocational education and training to young people and adults, with a diverse range of courses from pre-entry level to higher education programmes. The college offers programmes in 15 subject areas, though numbers in land-based provision, engineering and construction are small.
2. The college's curriculum has changed considerably since the last inspection, with a significant increase in the proportion of learners on vocational programmes. There has been a significant growth in the amount of employer-responsive provision, particularly through adult National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in health, public services and care and business Train to Gain programmes. The college has also increased its provision in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) to meet local needs.
3. The proportion of school leavers in Harrow achieving five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is above the national average, but many learners join the college with lower than average prior attainment. Over 75% of learners are from minority ethnic heritage, which is considerably higher than the proportion in the local population.
4. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Harrow Collegiate (AS and A level)
  - London Borough of Harrow (adult community learning, adult safeguarded learning and 14–16 skills centre – construction)
5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
  - SAFE (Train to Gain)
  - Nisai Virtual Academy (learners aged 16 to 18 with medical problems)
  - Construction Training London (plumbing)
  - North London ITeC (ESOL for adult learners)
  - Shaw Trust (adult learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities)
  - Harrow Collegiate (AS and A level)

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2007/08
Young learner provision: 14–16 Further education (16–18) Foundation learning tier	213 learners 1,898 full-time learners 250 part-time learners 1,398 full-time learners 48 part-time learners
Adult learner provision: Further education (19+)	643 full-time learners 2,473 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	1,482 learners 53 apprentices
Informal adult learning	2,200 learners

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

Subject areas	Grade
Health and social care	2
Science	2
Information and communication technology	3
Social sciences	2
English	3
Business, administration and law	3

Inspectors graded learner responsive provision in science, information and communication technology, social sciences and English, and employer responsive provision in health and social care and business.

## Overall effectiveness

- The college's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Senior leaders have set a clear direction to secure improvements. Overall outcomes for learners are satisfactory. The college is making good progress in improving outcomes for significant groups of learners, for example in raising achievement on AS- and A-level courses in 2008/09. The quality of provision was judged good in health and social care, science and social sciences and satisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT), English and business. Learners' achievement on Train to Gain programmes is satisfactory.

7. Attendance rates were below those usually seen in similar colleges in 2007/08, but are improving to a satisfactory level. The college's self-assessment acknowledges that the overall quality of teaching and learning remains satisfactory. More able learners are not always sufficiently challenged to make the best progress they could. Inspectors observed evidence of the impact of strategies implemented to improve teaching and learning and judged that there is good capacity to improve the proportion of lessons that are good or better.
8. The college works very well with local schools, employers and community groups to meet a wide range of diverse needs in the area. Learners receive good support to enable them to achieve what is expected of them and to progress well into further or higher education, training or employment. However, rates of progress on Train to Gain programmes are often slow.
9. The college promotes health and safety and the safeguarding of learners well. Promotion of equality of opportunity is also good, and the college has been successful in raising the achievement of many male learners and those from many minority ethnic groups in 2008/09.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications has increased each year over the last four years and is broadly in line with national averages.
- The proportion of adult learners taking NVQs who achieved their qualifications improved in 2008/09 and is satisfactory. However, fewer learners achieved their qualification within the planned time than in the previous year.
- Most learners make satisfactory progress towards achieving their qualifications, and learners on level 3 vocational courses make good progress. There has been significant improvement in learners' progress on AS- and A-level courses, where results have improved from well below average in 2007/08 to just above average in 2008/09. On many courses, too few learners achieve high grades.
- Learners feel safe in college and the college promotes safeguarding and health and safety well.
- Attendance has improved over the last year and is satisfactory.
- Learners enjoy their lessons, especially when they are able to take an active role in their learning. They develop good subject and work-related skills, which enable them to progress well to further or higher education or employment. Work-based learners develop skills that help them to be more effective in their job roles and move into higher-level training or promoted positions.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. College procedures for evaluating the quality of lessons are robust, but the college acknowledges that too much teaching is no better than satisfactory. Teachers do not always challenge the more able learners to make as much progress as they could. Teaching or training was judged good in health and social care, science and social science and satisfactory in ICT, English and business.

- The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. Highly productive partnerships with local businesses, councils, private organisations, training providers and schools provide the opportunity for many learners to progress from entry level to higher education and employment.
- Learners value the good support and guidance they receive. Many receive financial support, and support for additional learning needs is good, especially for full-time learners.
- Leadership and management are good. The Principal, governors and senior managers provide very effective strategic leadership and direction. The college has implemented a strong focus on quality improvement and is raising expectation and aspirations for staff and learners.
- The college actively promotes equality and diversity and tackles discrimination. Learners come from many different social and ethnic backgrounds. They mix easily and work well together.

### What does Harrow College need to do to improve further?

- Develop and support teachers further to plan lessons that meet individual needs and challenge the more able, to improve learners' success rates and increase the proportion achieving high grades.
- Maintain the increased focus on attendance monitoring and related actions to improve the attendance rate further.
- Share good practice in planning and review processes to improve learners' rates of progress on adult NVQ programmes.

### Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

#### What learners like:

- Enjoying their work and life at college.
- Friendly environment.
- Lively mix of learners.
- Feeling safe at college.
- Good support from teachers, trainers and assessors.
- Encouragement to do better and gain more qualifications.
- Learning and developing further skills and knowledge.

#### What learners would like to see improved:

- Social and common room areas.
- The range and quality of food and speed of service in the college cafes.

## Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

### What employers like:

- Prompt response from the college to meet training needs with innovative, bespoke programmes.
- Frequent contact with, and the flexibility of, assessors.
- Training that has improved the quality of service.
- Support for learners for whom English is not their first language.
- Good communication with the college and being kept up to date with learners' progress.
- The way learners are enthused about their learning.
- The excellent progression routes for 14 to 16-year-old learners.

### What employers would like to see improved:

- More information and contact with the college at the beginning of courses.
- The tracking of some individual learners' progress, particularly on business programmes.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

10. The college has made good progress towards rectifying most of the key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Success rates for long courses have improved. Attendance has improved and the college is monitoring attendance and punctuality closely. Strategies to increase employer engagement have been effective in raising the numbers of adults in work-related training. Good progress has been made to bring about changes to the college's curriculum to meet local needs. The college acknowledges that the proportion of good or better teaching needs to be improved further.
11. Arrangements for quality improvement are well developed. Self-assessment is thorough and broadly accurate. It clearly identifies areas requiring further improvement and is used effectively to inform actions for improvement. Good use is made of the course review process to plan for improvement.
12. Leaders and managers set ambitious targets for improvement. They motivate staff well and have their support. Development planning is comprehensive and closely linked to strategic objectives. Governors appropriately challenge senior managers to meet demanding strategic objectives and raise standards. Senior leaders communicate strategic objectives and developments for improvement very effectively. Staff have a good understanding of these objectives and the action plans to secure improvement. The college acts on users' views to bring about improvements.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

13. Learners' attainment of qualifications is satisfactory. Overall success rates have risen by five percentage points between 2007/08 and 2008/09 and are broadly in line with national averages. The college's own analysis has accurately identified concerns at level 1 for learners aged 16 to 18, where success rates declined last year and are below average. While there was little change in success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 at level 2, they remain around average. Success rates on level 3 courses are now a little above average. Significant improvement in AS- and A-level success rates has brought these from being below average in 2007/08 to slightly above average in 2008/09.
14. Value-added data showing learners' progress in comparison with their starting points on advanced level programmes show improvement over several years and indicate that most learners now make at least the progress expected. However, the proportion of learners who achieve high grades is lower than average on many courses. Learners on level 3 vocational courses make good progress and success rates are at or above average.



15. Success rates for adults improved at all levels in 2008/09 and are satisfactory overall. They are highest on level 1 and 3 programmes, where they are a little above the previous year's average, but remain just below average at level 2.
16. Framework success rates for the small number of apprentices on childcare courses have improved over the last three years and are now well above average. Overall success rates on Train to Gain programmes have improved in 2008/09 and are satisfactory. However, too many learners do not achieve within their planned end date and timely success rates are low.
17. The college has made good progress in reducing most of the differences in performance between different groups of learners. For example, success rates for male learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses improved significantly and success rates for adult males improved at all levels in 2008/09. The college's detailed analysis of performance by different groups demonstrates marked improvement in success rates for many minority groups. However, the college has identified areas for further improvement, for example, for some African, Caribbean and Other Black learners on level 1 courses. Learners in receipt of learning support achieve results above the college average.
18. In 2007/08 attendance rates were lower than usually seen in similar colleges. Strategies implemented to improve attendance have increased overall rates by two percentage points in 2008/09, to 79%. Managers are aware that this needs further improvement. Comparisons made at the time of inspection with a similar point last year indicated improved attendance in the majority of subject areas. Attendance rates in lessons observed during the inspection confirm that attendance is improving and is satisfactory.
19. Learners develop good skills to help them progress to further- or higher-level education, training or employment and progression rates are good. In many subjects, inspectors noted good development of teamwork and presentation skills. Employers spoke positively about how their employees were developing work-related skills that enabled them to improve their work and productivity.
20. The college's 'Skills for Success' strategy has replaced key skills with adult literacy and numeracy qualifications, with learners working towards GCSE English, where appropriate. This is helping learners to develop their literacy and numeracy skills, with many examples of learners progressing from literacy and ESOL courses to full-time courses at levels 2 and 3. Success rates on adult literacy and numeracy courses are significantly higher than their key skills predecessors, but they remain below average.
21. Learners state that they feel safe and that the diverse groups within the college mix and integrate well. Health and safety and safeguarding are promoted well throughout the college. Learners are aware of anti-bullying and harassment policies and know where to seek advice or support. Matters relating to personal safety, security and safeguarding are dealt with in tutorials. Inspectors observed learners working safely in studios, workshops or laboratories and work-based

learners reported that they felt safe in their workplace and in training. While learners are provided with information on healthy eating, many do not feel that the current refectory arrangements provide a good or varied choice. An increasing number are participating in sports through the extended enrichment programme.

22. Learners make a good contribution to the college and wider community, for example through organising charitable fundraising events and undertaking a range of voluntary activities. These include running sports clubs, acting as ambassadors at college events, mentoring younger learners and representing their peers on the Harrow Youth Council. Learners are increasingly involved with making decisions about the college, through the course representative schemes and the Student Union. In some areas, curriculum teams consult learners about the choice of texts or assignments to ensure that they can fully engage with their work.

## The quality of provision

Grade 2

23. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The scheme for lesson observations is managed well by a trained team of expert observers. The college's self-assessment accurately identifies that too much teaching is no better than satisfactory. The college is now focusing particular effort on supporting and developing teachers whose teaching is not yet good or better, although the development needs of more accomplished teachers are not neglected. The work of the teaching and learning coaches is having a positive impact on developing teachers' skills.
24. Learners enjoy their lessons, work hard and are keen to participate. In social science lessons they participate particularly well in group work, and learners work diligently and safely in science lessons. Well-qualified teachers provide good support to learners. Lessons are often well planned to ensure that the needs of all individuals are met, but this is lacking in a minority of lessons. In lessons for social sciences and ICT, the more able learners are insufficiently challenged. Many teachers make good use of the learners' initial and diagnostic test outcomes to help plan their teaching. In employer-responsive provision for business, the planning and review of individual learning is not always effective and rates of progress are often slow. Learners' enthusiasm is not always harnessed to best effect by teachers, especially when they allow more vocal learners to dominate activities and so insufficiently engage other learners. Strategies to check learning are generally effective, although there is insufficient direct questioning in some lessons.
25. As the college recognises, the effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons is inconsistent across the college and the development of a virtual learning environment is at a relatively early stage. Recent substantial investment has increased access to digital technology,

including interactive whiteboards, for almost all teachers. There is some good use of ILT and in science it is particularly good.

26. Assessment and the review of learners' progress are satisfactory. Many assignments stimulate learners' interests and relate well to the world of work, helping to prepare them for employment. Marked work is returned in a timely fashion, but feedback to learners on how they might improve their work varies in quality. In employer-responsive provision for health, public services and care, assessors plan and prepare learners for their assessments well. The monitoring and review of learners' progress has improved since the last inspection, with four-weekly reviews in place, although their implementation is insufficiently consistent across the college.
27. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers is good. Learners have the opportunity to progress from entry level to higher education. Progression to higher-level courses within the college is good. The college runs a sizeable programme for school pupils aged 14 to 16, three quarters of whom progress to mainstream programmes at the college. Many entry-level courses are located at outreach centres in the local community to meet the needs of local residents.
28. Partnership working is highly productive. Good partnership working with local schools extends the range of courses available through the Harrow Collegiate. Courses offered by the college's Business Base are tailored to meet the specific training needs of local employers. Train to Gain programmes have grown significantly over the last four years, but the number of work-based learners on apprenticeship programmes is very small.
29. The college has taken effective action to improve its enrichment programme by extending the range of options available and increasing learners' participation. Staff have encouraged learners to reflect on the employability skills they will acquire through the programme. Learners in the visual arts take part in animation workshops and many taking care courses do sign language. Salsa dancing, sporting activities and driving test theory sessions are particularly popular. The student union has a broad representation and is an active promoter of student views.
30. Care, guidance and support are good. The increased emphasis on customer service has improved the accessibility and timely provision of welfare and learning support. Tutors and support staff provide good individual care and support for full-time learners and the part-time learners who use their services. Additional support has been provided to tutors to improve low attendance and implement more frequent reviews. Full-time learners are now successfully recording their progress and monitoring their own achievement on the interactive electronic learning plan. They welcome the direct access this gives them to teachers' comments and reports.
31. Support for additional learning needs is good, particularly for full-time learners. Take-up rates are high, and those in receipt of support achieve well. Support for

adult learners on part-time programmes is less extensive, but is available as needed.

32. Information, advice and guidance are good and available in a range of different formats. Learners, parents and carers receive detailed information about college life. The extended introductory period at the beginning of the year has ensured that additional time is given to induction. New learners have settled more quickly and the number of course changes has reduced. Impartial advice on career choices and progression is available to all learners and support for those progressing to higher education is highly structured, with particularly useful advice on funding issues.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

33. The Principal, governors and senior managers provide very effective strategic leadership and direction. They have taken well-considered actions to address a range of external challenges. The college recently introduced five clear strategic objectives, which provide a comprehensive basis for development planning and improvement. They are well understood and supported by staff. As at the previous inspection, communications within and across the college sites are good. Significant change has been managed well, including a major restructure and revised curriculum offer.
34. Governance is dynamic with thorough risk assessment and full involvement in strategic planning. Governors set demanding targets for the college and closely monitor performance at strategic and executive levels. They provide a good level of scrutiny and challenge to senior managers. The college is making good progress in arrangements to link individual governors with subject areas.
35. The promotion of safeguarding is good. Policies and procedures for safeguarding young learners and vulnerable adults are clear and appropriate, and reviewed annually. The college has undertaken a college-wide risk assessment and created a safeguarding and protection team of five designated protection officers. This team is led by the designated member of senior staff for safeguarding arrangements who has received the appropriate training to Local Children Safeguarding Board (LCSB) standards. The college carries out Criminal Records Bureau checks and has a single register of all staff employed directly by the college. Staff have undergone training in safeguarding. They are fully confident in raising safeguarding matters with the protection team. Training for governors is currently in progress.
36. The college has developed a wide range of appropriate materials that are used for display, in tutorials and at student fairs to raise awareness of safeguarding issues. The college has good links with relevant agencies and is a member of the LCSB. There are well-established arrangements to monitor and manage health and safety, with systematic reporting to governors.

37. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college has appropriate policies and action plans to meet its duties with regard to race, gender and disability legislation. These policies are regularly reviewed and updated. The college recruits many learners from diverse backgrounds and promotes respect and tolerance successfully. Equality and diversity are celebrated well. Staff and governors receive a wide range of training for their roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity. Governors are involved in the development of equality schemes. New appointments to the board include consideration of achieving a profile that reflects the local community.
38. The student union has equality and diversity officers for each campus. These learners are members of the board's equal opportunities committee. The college's policies on bullying and harassment are effectively implemented to raise awareness for all learners. Consideration of the success rates for different groups of learners and action plans for improvement is integral to the annual course review process.
39. Equality impact assessments are satisfactory. The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching, learning and assessment, and in group tutorials, is generally well established. However, equality and diversity are not sufficiently reinforced in work-based learner reviews. The monitoring of the performance of different groups of learners is undertaken routinely and reported on at senior level and to the governing body. The college has made progress in closing or narrowing most achievement gaps between groups of learners.
40. Engagement with users to support and promote improvement is good. Learners are represented on the governing body and through the student council. Representatives are provided with appropriate training for their roles. Learners have regular opportunities to attend meetings with their head of school, take part in college focus groups, and participate in course satisfaction surveys. The college engages with work-based learners and their employers through regular assessment visits. The college has an effective strategy for learner engagement to inform improvements. Learners' views are valued and considered in the planning and improvement of provision. The policy to engage with users has been thoroughly reviewed. Good progress is being made by the college to further develop arrangements for learner engagement and feedback to learners. A learner voice committee of the governing body has recently been established.
41. Arrangements for quality improvement have been strengthened since the previous inspection. The teaching and learning observation scheme is more rigorous. The revised processes for annual course reviews are comprehensive. All course reviews are led by a member of the executive team and outcomes are used to identify improvements, inform self-assessment and set appropriately challenging targets. Staff have a clear understanding of the targets set for improvement and how these apply to their area of responsibility. Action plans are detailed and include appropriate areas for improvement. These are closely linked to the college's development plan and strategic objectives. Self-assessment is good, thorough and broadly accurate.

42. The use of resources is carefully planned. Accommodation, property and equipment are well maintained. Resources for teaching and learning are appropriate to meet learner needs. The college has improved arrangements for learner services and is developing an additional vocational centre. Financial management is good. In the context of satisfactory outcomes for learners, value for money is satisfactory.

## Subject areas

Health and social care

Grade 2

### Context

43. Currently, 136 learners are working towards NVQs in health and social care, 143 are following programmes in information, advice and guidance and 23 learners are studying NVQ community development courses at level 2. Training for 167 learners on NVQs in providing security services is subcontracted to a partner company. Seven apprentices are working towards children's care, learning and development qualifications.

### Key findings

- Learning and attainment are good. Success rates are very high for learners on the NVQ in providing security services. Success rates for learners in health and social care and information, advice and guidance are close to national averages. Success rates for the small number of apprentices in children's care have improved over the past three years and are well above the national average.
- The numbers of learners on NVQs in health and social care have increased substantially. However, progress towards completing qualifications is slow for many learners and timely success rates declined in 2008/09. Managers have recognised this, and actions to improve rates of progress are beginning to have a positive impact in the current year.
- Rates of progression to higher-level courses and into more responsible job roles are good. Health and social care learners frequently progress from level 2 to level 3 qualifications and into management positions. A small number have enrolled at universities for nursing degrees.
- Learners develop their professional skills and gain confidence to handle challenging situations with greater safety and effectiveness. Learners on information, advice and guidance programmes are better able to support clients in preparing for job interviews.
- Learners feel safe. They are aware that the college has a strict anti-bullying policy. Apprentices develop a greater understanding of their own and others' safety through practical activities identifying hazards in the classroom and around the college premises.
- Training and assessment are good and support learning and development well. Group sessions for childcare apprentices are carefully planned to include relevant and interesting activities related to healthy eating and health and safety. On all programmes, assessors plan and prepare learners carefully before assessing their skills and knowledge in workplaces.
- Assessment is thorough, using a good range of appropriate methods and making the most of naturally occurring evidence. Assessors use clear questioning and a number, but not all, have begun to make good use of digital recording of evidence. Learners provide very thorough oral and written evidence

to explain clearly key aspects of legislation and customer service. However, not all learners understand how the evidence they produce relates to the standards.

- Partnership working between the college, employers and the subcontractor is good. Employers appreciate the prompt and efficient way in which college staff respond to their requests for training and further needs. A few employers say they would value more information at the start of new programmes. Assessors are assigned to particular employers for consistency of service. Employers contribute routinely to reviewing learners' progress.
- Guidance and support for learners are good. Induction is thorough and assessors maintain regular contact with learners through visits to workplaces, email and phone calls. They provide detailed feedback to learners as they monitor their progress, recognising and confirming their developments in skills and knowledge. While assessors provide the majority of additional support needed in workplaces, learners who have additional learning needs are referred to specialist staff.
- Leadership and management are good. Team leaders have responded well to significant changes to the curriculum and increase in learner numbers. Team meetings are well planned to provide detailed information about funding, and awarding body requirements. Data are not always analysed sufficiently carefully to inform improvements to programmes.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory, although an opportunity to extend learners' understanding of multicultural issues during review was missed.

What does Harrow College need to do to improve further?

- Make more analytical and effective use of data for identifying where improvements to success rates and timely achievements are needed.
- Increase the confidence of staff to enable them to make further use of digital equipment for recording evidence where appropriate.
- Review the information that employers may need when employees start NVOs, particularly if the employer is not familiar with this method of learning and achievement.



## Science

## Grade 2

### Context

44. The college offers AS- and A-level biology, chemistry, physics and psychology, GCSE biology, chemistry and physics. The GCSE 'science package' is delivered on both sites and to a group of ESOL learners on one campus. Vocational science programmes include BTEC first diploma and the national certificate in applied science. There are currently 256 learners on AS- and A-level courses, 43 on GCSE programmes and 148 on vocational programmes.

### Key findings

- Overall success rates are good. Learners achieve well in GCSE science subjects. The proportion of learners achieving A\* to C grades is well above average in GCSE biology and physics and in line with the average in chemistry.
- Success rates on the first diploma and national certificate courses in applied science are above average. The proportion of learners achieving high grades is above average on the first diploma course.
- Success rates in A-level science courses are close to or above national averages and around average on AS-level courses. However the proportion of learners achieving high grades is lower than average, although there is an improving trend.
- Learners work diligently and safely in lessons. They enjoy their work and are helpful to each other, especially while undertaking small group work and practical activities. There is good attention paid to health and safety. Learners feel safe.
- Progression rates from the GCSE ESOL science package to higher-level courses are high at 90%.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teaching and learning coaches and staff development activities have contributed to quality improvement. In 2009/10 a programme of supported experiments is being established to promote new approaches in teaching and learning. Mini-whiteboards are used extensively in a variety of ways to support learning. However, there is not always sufficient challenge in lessons for the more able learners.
- There is effective use of ILT in the classroom. The virtual learning environment is used by teachers and learners in the classroom and remotely to access various resources. There are a number of revision exercises, quizzes and sample questions available. Short video clips and animated diagrams help learners with practical techniques and, for example, understanding the action of the heart and flow of blood through it.
- There is good support for learning. Most of the science technicians are also learning advisors and are trained to support learners, especially in their practical work.

- Leadership and management are good and promote equality and diversity well. Data are used well to monitor the performance of different groups. Retention, achievement and success rates are analysed by ethnic group by course and for the subject area. Managers identified that retention rates were lower for White British females than other learners and that female learners achieved less well than males in AS chemistry and biology. Staff are now able to identify those at risk and provide early intervention, as well as develop role models.
- The staff team responds well to learners' views. Course representatives gathered responses from their class groups in order to inform a subsequent discussion with managers. This has resulted in some changes to teaching, for example, the weekly handout packs now used in AS physics. This good practice is being shared across the college.

What does Harrow College need to do to improve further?

- Optimise opportunities in teaching and learning to demonstrate to learners the specific requirements of higher grades, especially in GCE AS and A2 classes.
- Ensure that lesson planning is effective in providing challenge for the more able learners.

## Information and communication technology

## Grade 3

### Context

45. The college offers full-time courses from level 1 to level 3. The 483 full-time learners are mainly aged 16 to 18 and follow courses including GCE AS and A levels in ICT, A-level computing, national diploma and certificate for IT practitioners, first diploma for IT practitioners, introductory diploma for IT @ work, diploma for IT practitioners and PC maintenance. There are a few part-time courses for adults.

### Key findings

- Learners' outcomes are satisfactory overall but vary between courses. Success rates are high on the national certificate for IT practitioners and AS ICT, where the quality of learners' work is good. Success rates are around the national average on the introductory diploma for IT @ work and A-level ICT courses. The proportion of learners achieving high grades on the national certificate for IT practitioners is above average.
- Attendance has improved to reach the college target. It was satisfactory in lessons observed during the inspection. Too many learners arrive late to lessons but teachers challenge this and encourage learners to improve their punctuality.
- Many learners progress to further and higher education. Over two thirds of learners on the national certificate course and 82% of those on A-level ICT progressed to higher education in 2008/09.
- The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with too much teaching that is no better than satisfactory. Learning outcomes on most lesson plans are well written and teachers provide good support in practical classes. There is an insufficient variety of learning activities and few opportunities for collaborative learning. Often the activities do not challenge the more able learners sufficiently.
- The range of provision is appropriate to meet the needs and interests of learners aged 16 to 18, where feedback from learners has recently shaped the course offer. Learners have opportunities to take additional qualifications, for example the certificate in i-media and an extended project. However, learners have little opportunity to understand the IT industry as they do not undertake any work experience and have insufficient contact with employers.
- Support for learners is good, including the support in class for learners who have specific learning difficulties. Learners who receive additional learning support succeed better than those who do not.

- An online system is used well for recording learners' individual learning progress. Learners are involved in negotiating their learning targets in tutorials and they know their target grades for each unit and overall. Learners and staff confidently use the system to monitor progress.
- Leadership and management are good. The manager has set a realistic agenda for improvement and is monitoring progress and performance targets effectively. Course reviews are evaluative and monitored by course teams regularly. Learners' success rates have improved. Staff are set challenging appraisal targets, for example to raise their observation grades and improve their use of ILT.
- Resources and accommodation are good. Many computer rooms are large and have enough space for small and large group work. However the computers are so close there is little room for learners' papers. Many computer rooms are uncomfortably hot.

What does Harrow College need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by using a wider range of activities and developing teamwork and presentation skills, in order to improve success rates further. Teaching staff should design learning to challenge the more able learners.
- Improve punctuality in all classes and further improve the attendance rate through individual target setting and monitoring.
- Develop relationships with employers and visiting speakers and ensure work experience opportunities are available where appropriate.

## Social sciences

## Grade 2

### Context

46. The college offers courses in GCE AS- and A-level economics, government and politics and sociology. Most learners are aged 16 to 18 and study full-time. There are 54 learners on economics courses, 35 studying government and politics and 131 taking sociology.

### Key findings

- Overall outcomes for learners are good. Success rates have improved and are above the national average on most courses. Success rates on A-level government and politics are consistently high. Most AS sociology learners achieved higher than expected grades in 2009. The majority of learners achieved their expected target grades. However, the proportion of learners achieving high grades on most courses is below the national average.
- The standard of learners' work is often good. A majority of learners demonstrate higher-level skills to critically evaluate and justify their findings. Many enjoy their learning and are making good progress towards achieving their target grades. They develop effective teamwork and interpersonal and presentation skills during group activities and exercises.
- Teaching and learning are good. Inspection evidence supports the college's findings that the majority of lessons are good or better. In an outstanding lesson, learners were encouraged to challenge each other to present reasoned arguments during a debate. This was particularly effective in developing their analytical and evaluative skills.
- The best marked work clearly shows learners how to improve their work, by explaining how to develop higher skills. In weaker marking the grade is given without an explanation of how to improve.
- The work set in the majority of lessons is not demanding enough for the more able learners.
- The range of provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. Learners particularly like how they are able to combine study on A-level and vocational courses.
- The department has developed good partnerships to meet the needs of learners. Social science lecturers teach in local schools and links with local high schools enable learners to access a wide choice of enrichment activities. Learners are encouraged to share their online reports with their parents. Economics learners attend activity days at local universities, which effectively develop their study skills within a university setting.

- Support and guidance are good. Learners receive comprehensive advice before they enrol. They find this particularly helpful in confirming their choices. Learners receive good support from lecturers. Their views are sought and acted upon. For example, improvements in timetabling means they no longer have long gaps between lessons. Advice on careers and higher education helps guide learners towards the range of opportunities available.
- Leadership and management are good. Management and leaders have taken effective action to increase overall success rates to above the national average. The internal lesson observation programme has been successful in raising the quality of teaching and learning to a good standard. Leaders promote high standards in an equal and supportive culture that is appreciated by staff and learners.

What does Harrow College need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' progress in comparison with their prior attainment, and the proportion of high grades, by monitoring courses with below average outcomes and setting specific improvement targets.
- Ensure that all lessons incorporate appropriate exercises and activities to challenge and stretch the more able learners.

## English

## Grade 3

### Context

47. Currently over 600 learners are following courses in English. The large majority follow full-time vocational, GCSE or GCE A-level programmes alongside their English course. Around 128 learners are studying at advanced level, while over 500 learners take courses leading to English GCSE. This course is a key part of the college's overall strategy to develop learners' literacy skills.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates on GCSE English courses are satisfactory. While more learners complete the course than is seen nationally, the proportion achieving A\* to C grades is below average. The majority of learners who take GCSE English are aged 16 to 18 and the proportion of A\* to C grades for these learners is in line with the national average.
- In 2009, success rates on AS- and A-level literature and AS language and literature were high. The proportion of learners who achieve high grades at AS and A level is comparatively low, with the exception of AS literature in 2009. Nevertheless, analysis of value added data shows that learners make satisfactory progress. There have been significant improvements in learners' progress on AS-level courses.
- Learners enjoy their courses. Contributions in class are sensitive, evaluative and amusing. In one lesson, learners used a wide range of adjectives to describe 'life' as an inanimate object, such as a frying pan, bed or teddy bear.
- The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and much is good. Teachers frequently elicit responses carefully, making learners fully justify their views. Teachers make effective use of well-prepared resources, such as a guide on tackling GCSE coursework, or a carefully structured worksheet on challenging the notion of 'non-fluency'.
- Teachers command the respect of their learners, inspiring them, building their self-confidence and raising their aspirations. Learners are invariably polite and assiduous in lessons.
- In some lessons, whole-class discussion is dominated by a small minority. Group work is not always effective. Learners do not always listen to their peers, particularly if they have no task while listening. In a minority of lessons, poor punctuality causes disruption.
- Learners' work is assessed well, with valuable comments on how to improve. Teachers use initial assessment well to plan lessons.

- The range of courses is appropriate. The pre-GCSE course helps learners develop literacy skills and progress to other programmes. Texts are chosen carefully to respond to learners' interests and backgrounds.
- Support is good. Revision sessions are valued. Those who start courses late are supported well. Teachers give effective individual help. Learners for whom English is an additional language benefit from enhanced support.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders have appropriate priorities for improvement. Strategies for tackling poor attendance have had an impact. The team is working on strategies to narrow the achievement gap between males and females on GCSE English. For example, specific texts have been chosen to appeal to boys and encourage them to participate fully in their learning.
- Self-assessment is broadly accurate and self-critical, although the weighting given to some weaknesses is insufficient. The views of learners are used well in planning. Teachers raise learners' aspirations. Classrooms benefit from displays of learners' work which teachers use to raise expectations.
- Safeguarding children and equal opportunities are embedded within the curriculum. The choice of the text 'The History Boys' raises awareness of issues relating to safeguarding. The anthology for GCSE explores issues relating to equal opportunities.

What does Harrow College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that male learners on GCSE courses are fully involved in their learning to reduce the gap between male and female achievement and improve the high grade pass rate on GCSE English courses.
- Target questions in lessons and develop strategies to control the contributions of keener learners to ensure that all learners participate in whole-class discussion.



## Business, administration and law

Grade 3

### Context

48. The college currently has 330 learners working towards NVQs in business administration, customer service, management, team leading, housing benefit and council taxation. Most are working with local employers, particularly the local council that employs just over half of all learners currently enrolled. The majority of learners are on level 2 courses, 145 are studying at level 3, with a few taking level 4 or 5 programmes.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates have improved in 2008/09 and are now in line with the national average. However, too many learners do not achieve within their planned end date and timely success rates remain low. Some learners have difficulty accessing sufficient time with their assessors, and there are sometimes delays in assessment.
- The development of learners' skills and knowledge is good. Learners enjoy their learning, and become more confident in their job role. They update existing knowledge and learn new skills that have a positive impact on their job performance in customer service, administration and management. Off-the-job training workshops and onsite coaching by assessors effectively support learning.
- Planning and review of individual learning are not sufficiently developed for all learners. Staff do not use initial assessment results to plan learning well to meet individual skills development needs. Training and assessment are not always well coordinated, with some learners completing their assessment before they have attended all of the planned off-the-job training modules.
- Reviews of learners' progress are poor. Staff do not complete reviews on time, and the reviews have too narrow a focus on completion of NVQ units. The reviews do not sufficiently review training, the job role and support needs. Line managers are not sufficiently involved in reviewing individual learners' progress.
- The college has recently appointed a Skills for Life project manager, and there is now an effective strategy to provide additional learning support where initial assessment results indicate a need.
- The college's response to meeting employer needs is good. The college develops good partnerships with employers and other providers to develop bespoke training workshops to meet the needs of the job, while also meeting NVQ standards.
- Assessors are very flexible in planning visits to meet employer business needs. For example, the college is working closely with one employer to ensure employees receive accredited qualifications before the forthcoming redundancies. Some employers report a positive impact on the quality of their working practices due to the training.

- Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners can easily contact assessors between visits, for example sending work via email prior to the assessor visit. Assessors have a good understanding of learners' individual needs, and adapt assessment methods to suit their preferred style. The introduction of digital voice recorders is having a positive impact on assessment. Most line managers provide good support and advice for learners, although, in a few cases, they are reluctant to release learners for assessor visits.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers are taking action to improve learners' progress. Assessors complete monthly candidate progress reports and managers are using these at monthly one-to-one meetings with assessors to monitor learners' progress and action plan where there is a support need. Staff meet regularly to review the programme, and all staff have plans for continuing professional development.
- Equality of opportunity has a strong focus throughout the college and with employers. Learners have a reasonable understanding of equality and diversity, and feel safe in the workplace and the learning environment. Most learners attend a workshop that effectively raises awareness of diversity, but assessors do not check learners' understanding of equality and diversity sufficiently in reviews.

What does Harrow College need to do to improve further?

- Use results from initial assessment more effectively to produce individual learning plans that focus better on individual skills development needs.
- Review learners' progress more frequently, with a more holistic review of their programme, and more involvement of the line manager.
- Develop better action planning with assessors and employers to help learners progress through their programme effectively and within planned timescales.

## Information about the inspection

49. Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the college's vice-principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
50. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Harrow College**

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14–16	16–18 Learner- responsive	19+ Learner- responsive	Employer- responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	3,393		2,750	643	
Part-time learners	3,050	105	116	1,982	847
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3	3	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do learners progress?	3				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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