

# City of Westminster College

## Inspection report

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Unique reference number: 130423

Name of lead inspector: Russell Jordan HMI

Last day of inspection: 12 February 2010

Type of provider: General Further Education College

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## Information about the provider

1. City of Westminster College, is a medium-sized general further education (GFE) college, and is the largest provider of post-16 education and training in Westminster. The college has five main centres and also operates from a number of outreach centres, often in partnership with other providers, such as hostels for the homeless in central and West London. The college's new purpose-built premises in Paddington Green will open in early 2011.
2. As well as serving the central London sub-regional economy, the college recruits many learners from the immediate local area. This includes three wards which have high levels of child poverty, long-term unemployment, crime and poor housing. High numbers of residents aged 16 to 74 in Westminster have no qualifications, inhibiting their ability to access employment. Significant numbers of refugees and asylum seekers live in Westminster. Central London has high levels of homeless people and, in particular, young people who have travelled to London from other parts of the country.
3. Numbers of students aged 16 to 18 on full-time programmes have increased significantly since 2005. In 2008/09, almost 75% of the college's students were from minority ethnic communities with Black African learners forming the largest single minority ethnic group. Approximately 45% of the college's students had a first language other than English. A further 42 other first languages are spoken. Almost all students come from London boroughs.
4. The college offers courses in 14 of the 15 subject areas, although numbers in some areas are small. The college began direct apprenticeship provision in 2009 in the creative skills sector. In 2008/09, learners aged 16 to 18 studying at advanced level accounted for almost two thirds of learners in this age group and just over half of all learners in learner responsive provision. Adults on courses at foundation level accounted for less than 15% of all learners in learner responsive provision.
5. Organisations providing training on behalf of the college include:
  - London Enterprise College (preparation for life and work)
  - Role Model Consultancy (business and administration)
  - Portabello Business Centre (leisure, travel and tourism)
  - HBC Academy (information and communication technology)
  - Peter Rowley Ltd (business and administration).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	34 full-time learners 91 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	1,998 full-time learners 307 part-time learners
Foundation learning, including	139 full-time learners 27 part-time learners
Entry to Employment	172 learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	1,068 full-time learners 1,223 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	2,196 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 3
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

Subject Areas	
Health, social care and child care	3
Science and mathematics	3
Engineering	2
Construction	2
Foundations for learning and life	2

Inspectors graded learner responsive provision in health, social care and child care; science and mathematics; engineering; and in foundations for learning and life. They graded learner and employer responsive provision in construction.

## Overall effectiveness

6. This is a satisfactory college with satisfactory capacity to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall and are good in engineering, construction and in foundations for learning and life. Learners enjoy college and feel safe in a welcoming and harmonious environment. However, their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory rather than good and need to improve.
7. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In most lessons students work diligently to develop appropriate knowledge and skills, guided by competent teachers. However, too much teaching is mundane and fails to

challenge or inspire students to achieve as well as they should. College provision adequately meets the needs and interests of users. The range of provision is good in most of the subject areas inspected. However, work-based learning provision for learners aged 16 to 18 and the amount of provision at foundation level for this age group are too restricted. Partnerships with schools, employers and voluntary organisations work well to benefit learners. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. In two of the subject areas inspected tutorial support is weighted heavily on progress towards qualifications, so that the personal needs of learners are not always met fully.

8. Leaders and managers have a mostly accurate view of the college's strengths and areas for improvement and they recognise there is further work to do to improve performance. Quality assurance arrangements have been slow to secure improvements since the last inspection. This is reflected in the slow improvement in learners' outcomes. The college's lesson observation system is not yet sufficiently effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Key areas for improvement from the last inspection, such as the sharing of good practice, remain unresolved.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. The rate of improvement in success rates has been slow since the last inspection, and where these improved significantly in 2007/08, this improvement did not continue into the following year. In A-levels and other advanced level courses learners make satisfactory progress compared to their prior attainment. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the main, students work purposefully in lessons to develop their knowledge and skills. In the better lessons, which tend to be practical sessions, teachers take into account what students already know or can do and devise activities to ensure that all students make good progress. However, too many lessons are lacklustre, characterised by a slow pace, low expectations and insufficiently challenging tasks.
- Students are beginning to make good use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to use materials and to view their individual learning plans. However, teachers do not use technology effectively to make lessons more interesting and enjoyable.
- In joint observations, inspectors were in broad agreement with college staff about lesson grades. However, in the college's observation records, the detailed feedback given to teachers does not give sufficient emphasis to how their teaching has an impact on what students learn.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not check with sufficient frequency and rigour what students have learnt. However, with homework and assignments, most students benefit from helpful feedback, which enables them to improve their knowledge and skills.

- College provision is adequately flexible and responsive in meeting the needs and interests of users. Curriculum planning reflects clearly government initiatives and priorities. Provision for school pupils aged 14 to 16 is satisfactory. Work-based learning provision for learners aged 16 to 18 and provision at foundation level for learners aged 16 to 18 are limited.
- Working relationships and partnerships with schools, employers and voluntary organisations are good. Through a wide network of links, the college influences the direction of provision for learners aged 14 to 19 in the City of Westminster. The needs of the homeless and unemployed are addressed through very effective working with a range of voluntary organisations.
- College students have access to a wide range of support. Tutorial support is centred strongly on helping students progress. However, target setting is often too general and insufficiently focused on the target qualification. Learning support assistants are insufficiently involved in lesson planning.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategic plans have been revised and now set a clear agenda for improvement. Targets are challenging and realistic. Governors offer good support and challenge to senior management. A well-developed system to monitor learners' progress has been implemented recently.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The college provides a welcoming and harmonious environment. Initiatives to reduce variations in success rates between minority groups compared to the college average have generally been effective. However, the college has failed to recognise that Bangladeshi and female learners do not achieve success rates in line with national averages. The college does not formally celebrate diversity and raise awareness of different faiths and cultures.
- Quality assurance arrangements have been slow to secure improvements and key areas for improvement remain from the last inspection. The process to observe teaching and learning is insufficiently focused on students' learning. The latest self-assessment is self-critical and mostly accurate, and links well to quality improvement plans. However, the college does not use data and management information well enough to inform management and drive improvement

### What does City of Westminster College need to do to improve further?

- Refine and promote the use of quantifiable targets as part of student progress reviews. Ensure that staff have been trained to set targets which focus on the individual elements of a qualification.
- Develop, in collaboration with employers, a college-wide approach to increase access to apprenticeship provision. Develop further foundation level provision for learners aged 16 to 18.
- Fully implement and review the recently introduced process of closely monitoring learner performance to drive up success rates.

- Revise the lesson observation scheme to focus explicitly on how teaching has an impact on what students learn. Support teachers to develop stimulating and challenging lessons to secure consistently good teaching across the college, so that all students are able to achieve to their full potential.
- Take a much more proactive and systematic approach to the promotion of equality and diversity across all aspects of the college's work.
- Take action to ensure that inconsistencies across the college are minimised, in terms of attendance and punctuality, quality of teaching, support and resources, by identifying and sharing existing best practice, so that all students benefit from consistently high quality provision.
- Use data and management information much more effectively to inform management and drive improvement.

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

#### What learners like:

- the range of courses at different levels that allow progression to higher level courses
- the level of preparation for their next steps into employment or further study
- how highly the college values learners' views and how well it acts on them.

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

- more social space
- more computers for open-access study
- improved support from the college in helping their progress in their studies
- a more welcoming approach from the college's administration team
- more consistent application of rules on attendance and punctuality
- more teachers using the VLE.

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

#### What employers like:

- the quality of support provided for their employees
- how well training is adapted to meet their needs
- the professionalism of the college staff
- the standard of learners' work and the progress learners make in their training
- how much they are involved in reviewing learners' progress.

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

##### in a few instances:

- better links between on-the-job and off-the-job training

- the inconsistent standard of learners placed on work experience.



## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

9. Capacity to improve is satisfactory. In recent years the college has effectively increased the range of provision to widen participation for under-represented groups and employers. The use of learners' views has developed well and is now strong. Financial management and the college's approach to being welcoming and inclusive have been maintained as key strengths. The management of the new build is good. Since the previous inspection the college has improved target setting and monitoring for individual learners. Success rates have improved in line with the sector average. However, quality assurance arrangements have been slow to have a consistent impact on improving the quality of provision across the college. Teaching and learning, attendance and punctuality, and insufficient sharing of good practice remain issues for the college to remedy.
10. The recently revised strategic plans are aligned accurately with improving the college's performance and image. Targets are challenging and realistic. Governors are involved actively in the development of the college. The recently appointed principal has made clear his intentions to increase accountability and improve success rates. In most aspects the latest self-assessment report evaluates the college's performance accurately and grades awarded match those of the inspection. However, the college's grade for equality and diversity is over generous.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

11. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall, and they are good in three of the subject areas inspected. The rate of improvement in success rates has been slow since the last inspection and has merely kept pace with the improvement in the national average for colleges of a similar type. In those areas where success rates did rise significantly in 2007/08, this improvement did not continue into the following year. Success rates for most learners on long courses in learner responsive provision were broadly average in 2008/09, but they were low for adults at level 1, as the college has recognised. For learners in Train to Gain both overall and timely success rates are satisfactory, but the college acknowledges that it needs to ensure that learners complete their qualification by their planned end date. Outcomes for learners in Entry to Employment provision are good. Key skills success rates are low.
12. Learners make satisfactory progress overall, although inspectors judged that learners' progress was at least good in three of the curriculum areas inspected. In A levels and other advanced level courses learners make satisfactory progress relative to their prior attainment, but pass rates in a number of these qualifications are below average. Learners' progress in A levels was high at the time of the last inspection. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, but inspectors reported a number of instances where latecomers disrupted the start

of lessons. Teachers apply the rules on attendance and punctuality inconsistently.

13. Learners feel safe and enjoy college. They value the college as a welcoming and harmonious environment. Attention to health and safety in lessons and practical activities is good and learners work safely.
14. Inspectors identified that the standard of learners' work and the development of employability skills were good in a number of areas. Learners highlight the preparation they receive for their next steps into further study, and in particular into higher education or employment. However, learners' average success rates and their low achievement in key skills in literacy and numeracy inhibit progression into further study and employment. As a result, the extent to which learners develop economic and social well-being through learning and development is satisfactory rather than good. Learners are adequately equipped to make informed choices about their own health and well-being. The extent to which they make a positive contribution to the community is satisfactory.
15. The college has been successful in bringing about convergence in the achievement of different groups of learners to the college average. However, the college had not identified that in a few cases minority groups perform significantly below the national average. Targets for driving up outcomes for learners are challenging and realistic, but the college does not yet routinely measure its performance against the higher national averages for general further education colleges. It acknowledges that data on learners' progression are under utilised in developing the quality of provision.

## The quality of provision

Grade 3

16. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the main, students work purposefully in lessons to develop their knowledge and skills. In the better lessons, which tend to be practical sessions, teachers take into account what students already know or can do and devise appropriate activities to ensure that all students make good progress. This was particularly evident in one very successful lesson at a centre for the homeless, whereby each student worked productively on a different construction craft activity, skilfully planned, guided and assessed by an enthusiastic teacher. However, this is not typical. Too many lessons are lacklustre, characterised by a slow pace, low expectations and insufficiently challenging tasks.
17. Teaching methods and learning materials are sensitive to equality and diversity. Students are beginning to make good use of the college's VLE to access materials and to view their individual learning plans. However, teachers do not use technology effectively to make lessons more interesting and enjoyable.
18. In joint observations, inspectors were in broad agreement with college staff about lesson grades. However, in the college's observation records the detailed feedback given to teachers focuses on what they do well or not so well, but

does not give sufficient emphasis to how their teaching has an impact on what students learn.

19. Assessment practice is satisfactory. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not check with sufficient frequency and rigour what students have learnt. However, with homework and assignments, most students benefit from helpful feedback, which enables them to improve their knowledge and skills.
20. The range of provision meets the needs and interests of users adequately. The 2009/2012 curriculum plan is influenced appropriately by government initiatives and priorities. The college is flexible and responsive in meeting the needs of employers. In science and mathematics, the college offers a range of courses which allow students from a variety of backgrounds and prior experiences to progress. The development of diploma provision is satisfactory. Provision arising from school links for learners aged 14 to 16 is satisfactory, although with small numbers of pupils participating. Engineering provides a good range of full-time craft qualifications at foundation level to advanced level. In construction however, the proportion of foundation level provision is low. The number of apprentices currently at the college is small and confined to one faculty. Enrichment activities are satisfactory.
21. Partnerships with schools, employers and voluntary organisations are good. The college plays an influential role in the Westminster 14-19 strategic group, helping determine the nature and range of provision for students in this age group. Working closely with Connexions and local schools, the college helps to identify and support pupils with disabilities aiming to progress to further education. College faculties work very effectively with employers in responding to identified training needs. This includes management training for a local council, the training of staff in assessment skills for a national public limited company, and the development of a discrete programme for pre-apprenticeship learners in the construction industry. As a member of the Westminster Worklessness Group, the college contributes to the local authority strategy to support homeless people into employment. Through links with the Ministry of Defence Education Outreach Programme, college students have the opportunity to develop employability skills. In partnership with the Prince's Trust, provision to meet the needs of learners not in education, employment or training has been developed successfully.
22. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The college offers a wide range of support to students and has well developed links with external referral agencies with expertise in, for example, housing and substance misuse. As part of induction to the college, students receive comprehensive information about the support available to them. Tutorial support is very effective in helping students progress, but target setting on some individual learning plans continues to be too general and not sufficiently focused on the target qualification. For some students, care and guidance during their time at college are weighted heavily towards their academic progress, at the expense of care and guidance for pastoral and social well-being. Learning support assistants are available to work with students in the classroom. Many of the assistants are not qualified to

provide literacy and numeracy support, when called upon to do so. Learning assistants are insufficiently involved in the preparation of lessons. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support.

## Leadership and management

Grade 3

23. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently-appointed principal, the governors and college senior managers have completed a full-scale review of the college's mission, vision, values and strategic aims. The expectations are challenging and intended to be compatible with the expectations of future users upon the opening of a purpose-built campus in 2011. The principal has re-affirmed the college's determination to improve success rates through improved accountability, focused monitoring and the setting of demanding targets at all levels. Staff are well informed, focused and positive about improving success rates. During recent years the college has been active in implementing a range of new provision to meet regional and local skills needs. However, in the same period the college's performance has merely maintained success rate improvements in line with the sector average for similar colleges. The management of the new college campus project is sound and this is expected to be completed on time and on budget.
24. Governors make a valuable contribution to the strategic development of the college and use their skills and expertise successfully to both support and challenge the senior team. They provide a particularly good overview of the new build and financial management. Governors have a clear understanding of college success rate performance and ways to improve. They are justifiably optimistic about the impact that a well developed and recently-implemented process to monitor learners' progress will have on improving success rates. Early indications from the pilot are positive.
25. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. All relevant policies and procedures are current and have recently been updated. Criminal Records Bureau checks are in place for all relevant staff. A senior manager oversees safeguarding arrangements and works well with designated college staff on the various campuses. Governors and all college staff have recently received further safeguarding training. The college has good links with the local safeguarding children's board, social services and other relevant agencies. Safeguarding procedures are well understood by staff and learners. The recording and monitoring of learners at risk is well developed and learners receive good support to keep them on programme. Health and safety procedures are monitored appropriately and learners generally work in safe environments.
26. The college is rightly proud of the significant diversity of learners attending the college and learners confirm harmony is good and well maintained. Effective actions have widened the participation of under-represented groups such as homeless learners. Arrangements to ensure learners are protected from harassment, bullying and discrimination are effective. Initiatives to reduce the variation of success rates between ethnic groups and males and females have been successful when compared to the college's average success rate.

However, the college has not recognised within the equality and diversity action plan that in a few cases minority groups are performing significantly below the national average, for example Bangaldeshi and adult female learners. Learners in receipt of additional support for a disability and/or learning difficulty achieve at least in line with their peers.

27. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The principal chairs the equality and diversity committee, demonstrating commitment from the most senior level to this area of the college's work. Terms of reference have been revised and policies and procedures are appropriate. All staff and governors have recently received further training with an emphasis on promoting equality and diversity in lessons. However, the impact of these developments has yet to be fully realised. Ways to measure the impact of initiatives to improve performance of minority groups are under-developed. Diversity in heritage, faith and culture are insufficiently celebrated and recognised.
28. The college listens to learners' views carefully and responds well. Feedback arrangements from other users are currently satisfactory. However, the college has clear strategies to develop feedback from other users in line with that of learners.
29. Overall, quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. At the previous inspection, a key area for improvement was in quality assurance arrangements and since then the college has been slow to make consistent and regular improvements across all provision. However, the latest self-assessment report is self-critical, accurate and represents clearly the college's current position. Quality improvement plans are linked appropriately to self-assessment findings. The recent introduction of a college-wide system to monitor, record, recognise and set clear improvement targets for individual learners has had a positive impact in improving retention rates. However, it is too soon to judge its full impact. The use of data to consistently monitor the college's performance throughout the year is not fully established.
30. Some subject areas have made steady improvements in success rates over recent years, for example in engineering; construction; health, social care and child care; and, languages. In contrast, some subject areas have failed to make sufficient improvement, for example information and communication technology; leisure, travel and tourism; and, visual and performing arts and media programmes. The college's observation of teaching and learning is insufficiently focused on learning, and the grade profile is over generous and does not reflect the performance of the college accurately. This key aspect of the college's performance is not monitored systematically and the analysis of the key aspects of teaching and learning is limited. The link between success rates and the quality of teaching and learning is not used in the review of the college's performance. Quality assurance arrangements for work-based learning are insufficiently focused on covering all aspects of the learner experience.
31. Financial management is good particularly with regard to the building of the new campus. The management of resources is satisfactory. Staff enjoy good

professional training opportunities, and these are well attended. However, as in the previous inspection, the sharing of best practice remains an area for improvement. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

## Subject areas

Health, social care and child care

Grade 3

### Context

32. The college offers full-time and part-time provision from entry level to advanced level in child care, and health and social care. Of the 70 learners aged 16 to 18, almost all study full time. Of the 189 adult learners, some 60% attend full-time courses. A small number of learners are on Train to Gain programmes.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall, but significant variations exist in success rates across the range of programmes. Actions to ensure that learners complete their studies have shown a measure of success following two years when too many students withdrew from their courses.
- Key skills success rates are low. The college has taken appropriate action to remedy this through offering alternative provision to meet learners' needs. Resources for functional skills are not related closely enough to the learners' vocational subject area.
- Learners' attendance is now satisfactory. The college has in place several strategies to improve attendance. Attendance is monitored regularly and recorded on individual learning plans. Support is offered to learners and letters are sent promptly to them when required. The college makes contact with learners' parents or carers to encourage regular attendance.
- Learners' work is satisfactory. The majority of written work is well presented and demonstrates appropriate knowledge of the vocational areas. Most learners are working at the level appropriate for their qualification. Feedback on written work is evaluative and identifies clearly the ways in which learners can make progress.
- Teaching and learning are good. The majority of lessons are well planned by teachers who have relevant vocational experience. In the better lessons, learners have additional extension activities which provide more interest and challenge. Learner discussions are well managed, with most learners contributing thoughtfully and sensitively. In the majority of lessons use of questioning to check and consolidate learners' understanding is good.
- Weaker lessons, which form the minority, do not involve or engage learners sufficiently. The teacher dominates the lesson and there is an insufficient range of teaching and learning strategies.
- Staff and learners have access to the college VLE system and learning activities and links are available to enable some research activity to take place. However, the VLE is under used at present and not all classrooms have access to the VLE system.

- Individual learning plans are used effectively. The majority of learners have electronic individual learning plans. Plans are regularly updated to reflect the learners' current progress. Information concerning individual target setting and attendance is presented in a clear, user-friendly manner.
- Partnership working is productive. A good range of partnerships have been developed which contribute to the learners' personal and professional development and enhance their employability. The college has established links with two primary health care trusts to offer a health trainers course. Courses in health and social care and child care are offered to pupils attending a local school.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Learners have access to additional learning support and this support has been effective in enabling learners, who may not have succeeded, to achieve their qualifications.
- Leadership and management are good. An appropriate range of actions is in place to rectify areas for improvement in success rates, retention and attendance. Staff are encouraged to share good practice to improve teaching standards further. The manager communicates well with the staff team and closely monitors learners' progress and staff performance. The safeguarding of learners is prioritised.

What does City of Westminster College need to do to improve further?

- Monitor and evaluate the initiatives which are in place to improve attendance, learner progress and success rates.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of guidance and support for learners at risk of not succeeding.
- Ensure that resources used in the functional skill lessons are more relevant to the learners' vocational subjects.
- Ensure that all teachers share good practice, particularly with regard to fully involving and engaging learners in their lessons.
- Develop teaching and learning opportunities on the VLE. Develop the confidence and expertise of all tutors in the effective use of the VLE and information learning technologies, to give learners more variety in lessons and to enable them to do more research and independent learning activities.



## Science and mathematics

## Grade 3

### Context

33. The college offers AS and A-level mathematics, psychology, physics, chemistry, biology and GCSE level mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology as full-time courses during the day for learners aged 16 to 18. An intensive one-year A-level mathematics and sciences programme accounts for 50 learners. BTEC applied science courses are offered at intermediate and advanced level. For adults there are part-time evening GCSE classes in mathematics and biology, and a daytime access to higher education in life sciences. In total, 602 learners study these courses which are all held at the Maida Vale centre.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Although overall success rates improved from 2007 to 2008, on many courses they declined significantly in 2009. However, they remain at or above national averages on the most popular courses. High grade pass rates in GCSE are satisfactory overall but there is too much variation in performance between subjects.
- The success rates in GCE AS level mathematics and psychology are high. In contrast, the success rates on GCE A-level programmes are low, and are particularly low for students on the one-year intensive course. Although many of this group achieve AS levels, too many fail the corresponding A level.
- The pass rates on GCE AS level laboratory science courses are low. In particular they are low for the learners on the daytime non-intensive courses. Too many of these students do not make the progress expected of them based on their prior attainment.
- The quality of students' practical and written work is satisfactory. Practical work is carried out methodically and additional support and instruction from technicians are effective. Students in mathematics present their workings systematically and clearly. Attendance overall is satisfactory, but punctuality is very poor in BTEC national lessons.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In lessons aims and objectives are clear and teachers are making increasing use of the interactive whiteboards and presentation software. However, there are some instances where these cannot be clearly seen from all parts of the classroom.
- Teachers' use of questioning in lessons to involve all students and check and extend their learning is often ineffective. Questions are often superficial and rarely directed at individuals. This allows the most vocal to respond but prevents the checking of all students' learning in the class.
- Teachers often dominate the lesson and leave too few opportunities for learners to work together or demonstrate their understanding through extended tasks in class. Records of homework setting and completion are often

incomplete, showing in some cases that few homework tasks have been set or that not all students have completed the tasks set.

- The college offers a good range of courses tailored to meet the needs of students from a wide variety of backgrounds and previous experience. An intensive (one year) A-level programme is popular, and a fast-track GCSE mathematics course, running from January to June, is successful. Access and BTEC courses provide an alternative, more vocational, route to further study or employment.
- Support for learners is good. Identification of literacy and numeracy support needs and the provision of support are well organised. Students have access to a number of additional subject workshops. A group of more able A-level students are working in partnership with medical students from King's College on a pharmaceutical development project.
- Tutorial support is satisfactory. However, the actions on the individual learning plans are often simplistic and not specific or measurable.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The self-assessment report is self-critical, detailed and accurate in its analysis of performance data, although over generous in its assessment of the quality of teaching and learning. More robust quality assurance systems are emerging, but inconsistencies remain in their application and their impact in lessons is insufficiently monitored.
- Accommodation is poor, leading to a lacklustre learning environment. Furniture and much of the equipment in the laboratories are old and uninspiring. Some of the classrooms are untidy and poorly decorated.

What does City of Westminster College need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the inconsistencies in performance between different classes and courses by more systematic monitoring of lesson activities, so that the quality of the students' experience does not depend on which class students are in.
- Ensure that all staff understand and implement the procedures for registration, attendance and punctuality.
- Improve the checking of learning within lessons by ensuring that questioning goes beyond simple recall and instead addresses students' deeper understanding of scientific and mathematical concepts. Teachers should make more use of directed questions to ensure that all within the group are active participants.
- Improve the skills of teachers by using a more detailed and evaluative lesson and peer observation scheme to identify and share good practice. The findings of lesson observations and other subject reviews should systematically inform staff development plans for groups of staff and individuals.
- Improve the system for the setting of homework and monitoring of its completion. Monitor mark books more closely so that there is consistency in the implementation of homework policies and so that teachers, tutors and managers may respond more readily to any emerging issues.

## Engineering

## Grade 2

### Context

34. The college provides a range of courses in motor vehicle maintenance and electrical/electronic engineering at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. At the time of inspection, 221 learners were on full-time programmes; most were aged 16 to 18. Around 30 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend part-time courses.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good with high success rates for all full-time courses. Success rates for full-time motor vehicle courses at intermediate and advanced level are outstanding. Outcomes for the small number of learners aged 14 to 16 are satisfactory. Learners' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
- Learners' satisfaction and enjoyment levels are very high. Learners develop good levels of industrial skills, predominantly through practical lessons. The quality of learners' work is good and emphasises their confidence and ability to achieve appropriate industrial skills.
- Learners feel safe and work safely in practical workshop lessons. They are aware of their responsibilities towards health and safety, but there is insufficient warning signage for the hazardous practical equipment and learning environments.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners respond positively to their challenges and work well, both individually and in groups, to complete tasks. In better lessons, teachers make good use of resources to enthuse learners and extend their learning. Many teachers make good use of their vocational experience and relate lessons well to activities in the workplace.
- However, a significant number of lessons are poorly planned and fail to take into account the needs and skills of all learners. Where a wide range of learners' skills and abilities exist, learners are often all required to carry out the same levels of tasks.
- Practical resources, particularly in motor vehicle work are antiquated and do not provide learners with sufficient experience of new technology, such as common rail fuel systems and digital graphing meters. Some teaching rooms are equipped with electronic whiteboards, but few teachers make use of their interactive capabilities to enhance learning.
- Progress reviews are good and make a significant contribution to learners' high success rates. Reviews are carried out at regular intervals and more frequently if a learner's slow progress may affect their achievement.
- The range, content and context of provision are satisfactory. The college provides an adequate range of full-time qualifications from foundation to advanced level. The part-time course offer is limited and there is no provision for apprenticeships. Work experience for full-time learners and enrichment

opportunities are rare and often not vocationally relevant to the needs of learners.

- Learners are well supported to help them achieve their programme. However, the care and guidance learners receive are heavily weighted towards their academic progress and achievement, and less towards providing for the needs of those vulnerable learners who have complex social issues and needs.
- Additional learning support for learners is good. The results of initial assessment of literacy and numeracy are used well to set and review precise targets, particularly at entry level and level 1. In-class support is effective in raising learners' understanding, particularly where English is not their first language.
- Leadership and management are good. The monitoring and evaluation of the performance of learners on the range of courses are thorough and have secured improvement. Staff awareness of, and involvement in, improvement actions for their courses is good.
- Teaching and learning quality assurance processes are broadly accurate, but over grade some aspects of teaching and its impact on learning. Aspects of the planning for the continuous improvement of teaching and learning are under-developed. These include the promotion of diversity in lessons for the high proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds, sharing of good practice and continuous industrial training for staff.
- Appropriate risk assessments are carried out. However, teachers do not monitor practical workshop areas systematically to ensure they are kept safe. At times, this results in insufficient reinforcement of working practices and serves to desensitise learners' awareness and identification of the dangers of their surroundings. Some equipment does not always have the necessary personal protective equipment readily available.

What does City of Westminster College need to do to improve further?

- Instigate a programme of continuous development for teachers in lesson planning, to include plans to meet and extend the wide range of learners' skills, and innovative uses of electronic whiteboards and e-learning to stimulate, extend and assess learners' progress.
- Pay more attention to promoting good practice in health and safety and in equality and diversity in lessons.
- Provide industrially-current equipment and systems for learners' use, to ensure learners understand and are technically competent to work with the latest advancements in technology, particularly for learners on advanced level motor vehicle courses.
- Investigate opportunities to deliver apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes in motor vehicle and electronic engineering, and opportunities for all full-time learners to participate in work experience and vocational enrichment visits.
- Ensure that learners receive consistently good guidance and support for their personal well-being in timetabled tutorial lessons.

## Construction

## Grade 2

### Context

35. Some 599 learners are currently on construction programmes. Some 44% of learners are adults attending full-time courses. Around 140 learners attend the college part-time. The main programmes are in plumbing and electrical installation at craft and technician level. The vast majority of learners are male and 58% of learners are of minority ethnic heritage. There are 42 adult learners on Train to Gain programmes.

### Key findings

- Overall success rates for learners are good and have improved steadily over the past three years, with many success rates significantly above national averages for similar colleges. Retention rates are good for most courses and there are no significant differences in learner performance across all three levels. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.
- Learners develop high levels of practical skills in workshops and these prepare them well for employment, with some learners developing professional craft skills quite early in their programmes. Learners enjoy their practical sessions and appreciate the skills they develop. Learners' progression is very good, with the large majority of learners at intermediate level progressing to advanced level, and over half of advanced level learners progressing to higher education courses.
- Learners feel safe at college. There is very good observance of wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and teachers reinforce safe working practice well in lessons. Induction covers health and safety thoroughly, and workshops are spacious. However, learners are insufficiently involved in producing basic risk assessments for tasks they will carry out in workshops.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching in workshops is generally well organised and taught by highly-skilled practitioners, some of whom have very recent industrial experience. However, theory teaching is less well planned and does not challenge learners sufficiently; learners remain inactive for too long. Schemes of work and lesson plans are under developed and contain insufficient information to enable teachers to plan for interest and variety.
- Teachers' use of e-learning is under developed. Interactive whiteboards are installed in some classrooms but few teachers use these boards to good effect, resulting in screens being used mostly for presentation software. Some teachers use presentation software merely to present text which learners copy.
- The monitoring of learners' progress is good. Monitoring information is accessible to learners enabling them to follow their progress. Managers make good use of an overview that enables them to identify learners at risk of not achieving. Assessment is good. Learners receive regular feedback from teachers and understand what they need to do to improve.

- The extent to which courses meet the needs of users is good overall. The college is developing more foundation level provision. However, there are no programmes for learners aged 14 to 16 and no apprenticeships. There is a good range of courses in electrical installation and plumbing, but there are no formal courses in the traditional construction crafts of carpentry, brickwork and painting.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Improved initial advice and guidance, together with improved initial assessment, have ensured learners are on the most appropriate course to meet their needs. The standard of information presented in group profiles is good but is not always used to inform lesson planning and meet learners' identified needs.
- Students receive satisfactory pastoral support through individual tutorials. The focus of personal tutorials is weighted towards academic achievement and less on meeting learners' personal needs. Targets set during individual tutorials are not sufficiently challenging or precise.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers have taken effective action to evaluate the curriculum offer and remove under-performing courses. Support has been focused on areas identified in need of improvement and teaching mentors have been introduced to provide support for teachers. However, managers do not focus enough on improving teaching and learning.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The college has been highly effective in recruiting a female minority group teacher for plumbing, who is an outstanding role model for young female learners. However, there has been insufficient inclusion of equality and diversity in schemes of work, lesson plans and teaching.
- Staff value learners' views and learners report that their views are listened to and acted upon. Learners feel they can approach managers to discuss any issues of concern.

What does City of Westminster College need to do to improve further?

- Identify clearly what is to be learned in lessons in achievable timescales by improving planning for learning. Plan a sufficient and extending range of tasks in lessons to challenge more able learners, keep the interest of the whole group and meet the diverse needs of all learners.
- Investigate opportunities to deliver apprenticeship provision and courses for learners aged 14 to 16. Investigate opportunities to extend the range of courses in traditional construction crafts.
- Extend staff understanding of equality and diversity and how these aspects could be promoted more effectively to learners in the context of construction and the built environment.
- Ensure that learners have clear and timely targets for their learning that are specific and measurable and monitored regularly.
- Add variety to lessons by ensuring teachers have well developed e-learning skills and are sufficiently confident to use this technology.

## Foundations for learning and life

## Grade 2

### Context

36. Currently 392 learners are enrolled on foundation programmes at pre-entry to level 1. Almost all learners are aged 16 to 18 and 65% are male. Nearly 50% of learners are on part-time, informal learning courses in the local community, and most of these are homeless or in temporary accommodation. Around 25% of learners are enrolled on eight full-time, vocational Entry to Employment courses including business administration and building services. These courses are delivered by relevant faculties and some by subcontracted partners. A further 25% of learners attend courses for learners with moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Progression rates to employment or further training on entry to employment courses are high. Learners gain greater independence and achieve challenging, individually-set goals successfully. Success rates on courses for learners with moderate learning difficulties are satisfactory. Success is celebrated in the centres by displays of work and profiles of successful learners' progress and achievements.
- Learners develop good personal, social and employability skills. They increase their confidence in working as part of a team and relating to others from widely differing backgrounds. They enjoy the challenge of learning new skills. They develop new interests and gain great benefits from work experience placements. Homeless learners make very good progress in developing essential skills including budgeting, money management and cookery skills.
- Learners feel safe and welcomed in all parts of the college, at outreach centres, and in work experience settings. Learners with disabilities are particularly positive about the welcome and support they receive from other learners. They develop good awareness of safe working practice in workshops and kitchens.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In practical lessons, learners work enthusiastically on well-planned, individualised tasks. In outreach centres, they make excellent use of small areas to practise cookery and construction skills. Tutors use simple explanations to encourage learning and very effective questioning techniques to check understanding and challenge learners to think through problems. Learners develop their confidence as they attempt new skills.
- In other lessons, tutors use a narrow range of teaching strategies and over rely on whole-group verbal explanations. Skills development activities are restricted to the completion of worksheets. Tutors do not plan sufficiently to address individual learners' needs. Learners have insufficient opportunities to practise their numeracy and literacy skills in relevant and meaningful contexts. Many resources used are dull and uninspiring.

- Initial assessment is satisfactory. An appropriate range of assessments is used to record learners' starting points accurately. Target setting to meet literacy and numeracy skills is underdeveloped. Targets are too general for learners to recognise and evaluate their own progress.
- Courses are well designed to re-engage vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. The curriculum is carefully planned to address their diverse needs. The range of provision is highly effective in matching learners' personal aspirations and work-related goals. Learning pathways are well developed and signposted clearly for all learners.
- The college has developed strong and effective partnerships with local employers, statutory and voluntary sector organisations. Learners benefit from integrated, multi-agency planning of provision. Learners have enhanced opportunities to gain employability and social skills and greater integration into local community activities.
- Learners receive good support in developing greater independence. The most vulnerable learners have individual support on specifically customised programmes. Learners with severe disabilities develop independent travel skills with well-trained support assistants. Business support coordinators provide effective pastoral support for learners in Entry to Employment. Tutors make good use of widge symbols and makaton signs to aid communication and understanding.
- Leadership and management are good. The college has a clear strategy to engage and meet the needs of the most socially excluded and disadvantaged learners in the local community. Staff have a good understanding of the clear commitment to inclusion. They receive very effective staff development opportunities to support their work with learners with diverse and challenging learning and personal needs.
- Equality and diversity are well promoted. The Queens Park enrichment worker organises a range of social and sports activities in lesson breaks. Equal opportunity matters are handled very effectively as they arise in the curriculum and actively planned into tutorial programmes.
- Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory and the self-assessment is broadly accurate. However, there are wide variations in the quality of the Entry to Employment programmes. Good practice is not identified clearly and shared between vocational areas.

#### What does City of Westminster College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all staff consistently plan stimulating and challenging learning activities to enable all learners to participate fully and make good progress. Increase the use of authentic learning materials to engage learners in developing their literacy and numeracy skills fully and provide relevance to activities.
- Make greater use of the initial assessment to set clear specific measurable targets for the development of individuals' literacy and numeracy skills. Involve learners in recognising, recording and evaluating their own progress and setting new specific targets.



- Ensure that examples of good practice in the design and implementation of Entry to Employment programmes are identified during business support coordinator meetings, observations of teaching and learning and shared across the faculty delivery teams.

## Information about the inspection

37. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's vice principal for quality, learning and organisational development, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the 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.
38. 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)			
Provider Name:	City of Westminster College	Inspection No	343683
Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full-time and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including E2E); 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships Blank Column: insert DWP employability programmes (including Workstep), or Judicial Services or nextstep as appropriate			

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 at the time of inspection					
Full-time learners	3,302	34	2,200	1,068	0
Part-time learners	3,817	91	307	1,223	2,196
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3				
<b>A. Outcomes for learners</b>					
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	3				
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3				
A3. How safe do learners feel?	2				
A4. Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3				
A5. How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	3				
<b>B. Quality of provision</b>					
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3				
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3				
<b>C. Leadership and management</b>					
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
C2. How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2				
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3				
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3				
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3				
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3				
C7. 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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