



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Newham College of Further Education

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

[Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[How well is the college led and managed?](#)

[To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?](#)

[How well are students and trainees guided and supported?](#)

[Students' views of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

[Part B: The college as a whole](#)

[Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors](#)

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of education and training](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

[Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[Science and mathematics](#)

[Construction](#)

[Engineering and railway engineering](#)

[Business administration, management and professional services](#)

[Information and communications technology](#)

[Hairdressing and beauty therapy](#)

[Health and social care](#)

[Art, design and multimedia](#)

[Literacy and numeracy](#)

[English for speakers of other languages](#)

[Foundation programmes](#)

[Part D: College data](#)

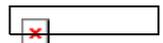
[Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2003/04](#)

[Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age](#)

[Table 3: Retention and achievement](#)

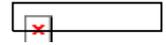
[Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level](#)

Basic information about the college

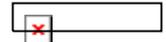


Name of college:	Newham College of Further Education
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Martin Tolhurst
Address of college:	East Ham Campus High Street South London E6 6ER
Telephone number:	0208 257 4000
Fax number:	0208 257 4325
Chair of governors:	Ms Parin Bahl
Unique reference number:	130451
Name of reporting inspector:	Michael John Davis
Dates of inspection:	15-25 November 2004

Part A: Summary



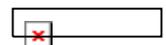
Information about the college



Newham College is one of the largest general further education (FE) colleges in England. It is by far the largest provider within the London East Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area. The college offers a very wide range of learning opportunities for students aged 14 to 19 and adults from entry level to level 3. There is also a significant higher education (HE) provision. The provision is mainly offered in the London borough of Newham, but also at other locations in East London. The college's main campuses are in the commercial centres of East Ham and Stratford. In addition, there are a number of local, neighbourhood and specialist learning centres many of which are integrated with other community and business functions. The college also has a number of Learndirect learning centres in the locality. The college has three centres of vocational excellence (CoVEs) for: the railway industries; for textiles manufacturing and design; and for financial and business services. The college is also one of the largest work-based learning providers in East London.

Newham is classified as the third most deprived borough in England and the most deprived in Greater London. Educational achievements of Newham school leavers are significantly below the national average. The college operates an open-access admissions policy, a six-term year, offers extensive provision at level 2 and below, and has developed a distinctive unitised curriculum. In 2003/04, there were 24,603 individual students enrolled. Over 75% lived in areas of high social and educational deprivation and 63% were from minority ethnic groups. Students following entry and foundation level courses accounted for two thirds of all students. There were 855 students with declared disabilities. Approximately 9,000 students followed the modular Newham college access diploma (NewCAD) programme, accredited through open college network (OCN). There were 3,824 full-time students, of whom 91 were aged 14 to 16; 1,540 aged 16 to 18; and 2,193 were adults. The college's mission is to provide inclusive learning for local communities by customising learning to meet individual, business and community needs; by offering learning that enables success and progression for all; and by stimulating and responding to demand.

How effective is the college?



Inspectors judged the provision to be good in six curriculum areas and satisfactory in five curriculum areas. Work-based learning was judged to be satisfactory in engineering, but unsatisfactory in construction. The college's key strengths and the areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

- highly effective strategic leadership and governance

- outstanding educational and social inclusion

- outstanding range of effective partnerships and collaborative working arrangements
- innovative development of a credit framework curriculum based on unit accreditation
- effective open-access admissions policy
- good student support systems
- significant contributors to local regeneration
- improving retention and pass rates in most curriculum areas
- good accommodation and learning resources
- good provision in mathematics and science, engineering, art and design, hair and beauty, information and communications technology (ICT) and foundation studies.

What should be improved

- retention and pass rates on some long courses
- student punctuality and attendance
- overcrowding in some classrooms
- proportion of teaching and learning that is good or better

- effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons

- effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements in some areas

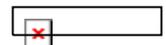
- use of targets for individual students in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

- teaching standards of staff supplied by third-party providers

- aspects of work-based learning, particularly in construction.

Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in the sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



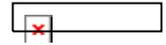
The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the range: Outstanding (grade 1), Good (2), Satisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (4), Very Poor (5).

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Science and mathematics	Good. Pass rates on advanced subsidiary-level (AS-level) and general certificate of education advanced-level (GCE A-level) science and mathematics courses are high. Much teaching is good and students' work is rigorously assessed within a very supportive learning environment. Information technology (IT) is used insufficiently in lessons and attendance on level 2 courses is unsatisfactory.
Construction	Satisfactory. Work-based learning contributory grade: unsatisfactory. Pass rates on national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes are high, but the completion of modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor. Retention rates have improved significantly since the introduction of NewCAD courses. Theory teaching is often dull and the provision of key skills is unsatisfactory. Initiatives to meet the needs of students and employers are good.
Engineering and railway engineering	Good. Work-based learning contributory grade: satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high on most courses. Teaching and

	learning for adults are mostly good and students develop good practical skills. Partnership working with railway employers is effective. The support and resources provided for work-based learners are good. Mechanisms to assure the quality of work-based learning and student progress reviews are inadequate.
Business administration, management and professional services	Satisfactory. Retention rates are improving and most are above national averages. Pass rates are mostly satisfactory, but high on two specialist courses. Accountancy teaching is good, but the range of teaching and learning strategies used on most courses is narrow. Learning support for students is good, but attendance is poor. Some short and part-time courses are poorly managed.
Information and communications technology	Good. Retention rates are mostly above national averages and improving. Pass rates are mostly satisfactory, but low on nationally recognised level 1 courses. Much teaching and learning is good and students produce high standards of work. The range of courses is very wide and the management of the franchised provision is good. Full-time students are well supported, but generally attendance and punctuality are poor.
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good. Pass rates are mostly satisfactory, but high in NVQ level 2 hairdressing. Retention rates are low on beauty therapy courses. Most teaching and learning are good and students are very motivated. The provision effectively meets the needs of a diverse community, but the number of clients available for training and assessment is insufficient. Specialist accommodation is very good. Students' attendance is poor.
Health and social care	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are generally satisfactory. Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory or better, but too much teaching lacks stimulation. In vocational lessons, students' key skills are underdeveloped. The curriculum is innovatively designed and attracts many non-traditional students. Initial assessment and support for individual students are good, but punctuality and attendance are poor.
Art, design and multimedia	Good. Retention and pass rates are generally good on advanced level courses and on the NewCAD provision. Teaching is mostly good and well planned. Specialist accommodation and equipment are excellent. The range of provision meets community needs and provides good opportunities for progression. There is comprehensive and effective support for students, but attendance is poor in some lessons.
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory. Achievement and progression rates have improved and are above the national averages. The NewCAD foundation provision is innovative and meets the diverse range community needs. Students develop good independent study skills. Teaching is mostly satisfactory or better, but insufficient attention is paid to individual learning, teaching vocational literacy and numeracy skills and the use of ILT. Initial assessment and induction are good.
English for speakers of other languages	Satisfactory. Retention and pass rates are high on NewCAD ESOL programmes. The majority of students gain in confidence and develop good independent learning skills. Teaching is satisfactory, but in some lessons students' individual needs are not adequately addressed. ESOL programmes are offered at a wide range of community venues. Some monitoring of the provision's quality is ineffective.
Foundation programmes	Good. Retention and pass rates are high. Much teaching is good with appropriate teaching styles used in most lessons. Initial advice and guidance are very effective and enable students to choose the right course. The provision of learning support and specialist learning

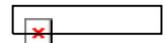
	support is highly effective. The setting of short-term targets is inadequate.
--	---

How well is the college led and managed?



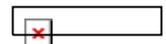
Leadership and management are good. Most weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. Retention and pass rates are improving and in most cases are at or above the national average. Strategic leadership and management are strong and effective. There is an outstanding and very productive range of external partnerships. Curriculum development is innovative and curriculum management is mostly effective. Quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive. Many curriculum areas are improving. However, the implementation of some aspects of the quality system is not always effective. The proportion of teaching graded as good or better has improved since the last inspection, but remains below the national average. The college's promotion of equality and diversity is good and is thoroughly integrated into all aspects of the college's operations. The college uses its financial resources well and is very successful in attracting funding from a variety of sources. It provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



The college's response to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. Attracting students that do not normally enter FE is a high strategic priority. Students come from very diverse backgrounds. Courses are offered in a wide variety of college, community and business venues. The college is a major contributor to local regeneration activity. The commitment to improve educational and social inclusion has led to a comprehensive redesign of the curriculum. The resulting NewCAD modular credit framework has considerably increased levels of participation. Retention and pass rates on these programmes are high. Two thirds of the college's students are from minority ethnic groups, accurately reflecting the local community. The college has made good responses to the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. It has appropriate policies and action plans and is making good progress towards implementing them. It is compliant with the requirements of Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). Most accommodation is accessible to people with restricted mobility.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support for students is good. The college is effective in removing barriers to learning and meeting the needs of individual students. Pre-entry guidance is comprehensive and impartial. Initial assessment is effective in identifying support needs. Students receive support early in their course. Induction arrangements are good. The process is used effectively to ensure students' are placed on an appropriate course and level. A good range of additional support services are provided, including learning support and advice on personal issues. Arrangements and funding for childcare are very good. Support for students with disabilities is effective. Independent study sessions are valued by students and staff provide good support. Tutorials for full-time students are good, but the provision for part-time students is sometimes inadequate. Initial assessment is not always used effectively in

sufficient impact on improvement.

Students' views of the college



Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below.

What students like about the college

- friendly and welcoming atmosphere

- making and meeting friends

- good access to computers

- helpful and supportive teachers

- being treated as an adult

- challenging and interesting work

- good range of books in the library

- flexibility of NewCAD

- childcare arrangements

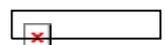
- opportunities for trips

- gaining qualifications for employment
- good campus security
- advice and guidance before the start of courses and induction.

What they feel could be improved

- price and quality of canteen food
- opening hours of the library
- college shop for stationery and course materials
- recreation facilities at Stratford
- support for part-time evening students
- a prayer room for people of all faiths
- key skills teaching and assessment.

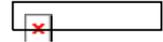
Other information



The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the formal feedback of the inspection findings to the college. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must

should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

Part B: The college as a whole



Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Aspect and learner type	Graded good or better (Grades 1 to 3) %	Graded satisfactory (Grade 4) %	Graded less than satisfactory (Grades 5 to 7) %
Teaching 16-18	67	29	4
19+ and WBL*	56	35	9
Learning 16-18	64	32	4
19+ and WBL*	60	31	9

Key: The range of grades includes: Excellent (Grade 1), Very Good (Grade 2), Good (Grade 3), Satisfactory (Grade 4), Unsatisfactory (Grade 5), Poor (Grade 6) and Very Poor (Grade 7).

*work-based learning

Achievement and standards



1. Retention rates have generally improved over the three-year period to 2003/04, and are now at or above the national averages. Most retention rates have improved considerably over this three-year period and most notably on long courses. Pass rates over the three-year period also increased for all levels except for students aged 16 to 18 following level 1 long courses. The pass rates in 2003/04 improved over the previous year and were above the national averages in all areas, except for students aged over 19 on levels 2 and 3 courses. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 were well above the national averages on level 1 and short courses. The proportion of students who successfully completed their qualification, based on those that started, improved between 2002/03 and 2003/04. In 2003/04, of the 37,000 enrolments, 70% were at entry level and level 1 with only 8% at level 3. Most of the enrolments in 2003/04 were in the foundation area of learning. Student data for 2001, 2002 and 2003 were produced by the LSC, but the college's 2004 data have yet to be validated.

2. Many fewer students followed long courses in 2003/04 compared with 2002/03. For example, the numbers of students aged 16 to 18 on long level 1 courses dropped by 73% between 2002/03 and 2003/04. The numbers of students aged over 19 on long level 1 courses also reduced in this period by 31%. However, this was mirrored by an increase in students following short courses on the NewCAD provision. This framework comprises of units, awards, certificates and the full diplomas accredited by the OCN. The numbers of students following short courses in 2003/04 rose by 139%

for students aged 16 to 18 and by 40% for students aged over 19. Retention and pass rates on each of the NewCAD short qualifications are high. The provision attracts many students who traditionally would not follow long qualifications. The NewCAD qualification framework encourages short-term achievement. Many successful students leave and return to study at a time that meets their personal needs. At present, few students complete the accumulation of units needed to achieve the diploma; the equivalent of a long qualification. However, for many students this is not their primary aim.

3. In 2003/04, college data indicate that retention rates at levels 1 and 3 are above national averages, especially for students aged over 19. However, retention rates dropped significantly between 2001/02 and 2002/03 and at some levels were poor. In 2003/04, the retention rates for level 2 long courses were at the national averages for all age groups after steadily increasing every year. Retention rates on short courses, which include NewCAD provision, are also above national averages and have increased considerably between 2002/03 and 2003/04.

4. Overall attendance during inspection was low. On average, only two thirds of students attended lessons, some 10 percentage points below the national average. Attendance varies between curriculum areas. For example, attendance was 59% in health, social care and public services and 76% in science and mathematics. Attendance is also low in the engineering, business administration, management and professional and hairdressing and beauty therapy areas. The average group size is large, at 12.3 students, which is well above the national average for similar colleges in 2003/04. Group sizes are particularly large in the science and mathematics, business administration, management and professional and art and design and multimedia areas.

5. Pass rates have increased over the last three years on long courses at all levels, and on short courses. Pass rates in 2003/04 are above the national averages on all long and short courses for students aged 16 to 18. In particular, pass rates are well above the national averages on level 1 long courses and on short courses. However, pass rates for students aged over 19 on courses at levels 2 and 3 are just below the national averages.

6. Student achievement relative to their prior attainment is measured by a value added system. Value added data indicates high levels of student achievement in most GCE A-level subjects. However, the percentage of high grades in GCE A-level subjects is low. The value added system is only applied to students on GCE A-level programmes and not to those studying AS-level subjects or other level 3 courses. Value added systems have not been developed for courses offered at other levels.

7. The total number of students following key skills qualifications declined from over 900 in 2001/02 to 355 in 2003/04. The college policy is to offer most level 2 students NewCAD units as an alternative. However, the overall pass rate for the key skills tests has increased over this period to 52%. The percentage that attended lessons in 2003/04, at 59%, was the highest of the last three years. In 2003/04, of the 328 full-time level 2 NewCAD students, 70% achieved at least one credit in applied communications and 60% achieved at least one unit in application of numbers.

8. In most areas of learning, the standard of students' work is good. However, many students arrive late for lessons and disturb the learning process. Lateness is sometimes ignored and late students are often unchallenged. Most students are well motivated, committed and industrious. For example, construction and engineering students and level 1 hairdressing NewCAD students make good progress in developing their practical skills. Literacy and numeracy students increase their self-confidence and self-esteem and work well in teams. In science lessons, students gain practical, observational and analytical skills. Many students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress on to other courses within the college. Students on ESOL courses make good progress in developing their listening, speaking and independent learning skills. Adult students are well motivated and committed to their learning.

16 to 18 year olds

9. About 16% of the students in 2003/04 were aged 16 to 18. About 40% of these followed full-time courses. Some 60% of the individual qualifications followed were at level 1 and 10% were at level 3.

Retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 are above national averages and improved over recent years. Similarly, all pass rates for this age range of students are above the national averages and most have improved each year for the last three years.

10. Many work-based learners in construction and engineering make slow progress. The achievement of apprenticeship frameworks in construction is poor. Many learners are past their planned completion date and still have significant amounts of work to complete. The college has awarded only two full frameworks since 2000. The achievement of key skills is also poor. Many work-based learners complete most aspects of their apprenticeship framework except key skills. In engineering, the achievement of key skills and apprenticeship frameworks for learners who started in 2000 is poor. Since 2001, level 2 engineering learners are now required to complete their key skills at the same time as working towards their NVQ.

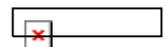
11. The standard of students' work is high in most areas of learning. Students make good progress relative to their prior attainment. Students are mainly successful in achieving their qualifications and the targets set during lessons and in assignments. Most students develop high levels of personal and learning skills. Most work-based learners make good progress in developing practical skills. They are well motivated and enthusiastic and they enjoy their training.

Adult learners

12. Adult students account for three quarters of all the qualifications followed at the college. Of these, most are on level 1 programmes with approximately 7% at level 3. Approximately 10% of adult students attend full time. Retention rates for adult students are at or above the national averages and improving. Levels 1 and 3 are particularly good. Pass rates for adult students are above the national averages on level 1 and short courses, but are slightly below on courses at levels 2 and 3. Pass rates have improved each year for the last three years.

13. The standard of adult students' work is high in most areas of learning. They make good progress relative to their prior attainments. In particular, the development of their personal and learning skills is good. Most students achieve their qualifications. They are attentive in lessons and their coursework is completed to a high standard.

Quality of education and training



14. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors graded teaching, learning and attainment in 205 lessons. Teaching was good or better in 60%, satisfactory in 33% and less than satisfactory in 7% of lessons. The good or better teaching was lower than the national average, at 65%, for all colleges inspected between September 2001 and June 2002. Some 61% of the learning grades were good or better, slightly below the national average. The percentage of lessons that were very good and excellent, at 17%, was 8% below the national average for similar colleges. The teaching and learning of students aged 16 to 18 is generally better than the teaching of adults, some 13% higher for teaching. The best teaching was at level 1, where 68% of lessons were good or better. The weakest teaching was at entry level which was 11% below the national average. Overall, the proportion of less than satisfactory teaching was slightly better than the national average. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in ICT; and hairdressing and beauty therapy. The highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses, at 10%. Generally, the teaching of practical subjects was much better than the teaching of theory. The quality of teaching by teachers employed directly by the college was significantly better than the quality of teaching provided by a third party.

15. The best teaching is in the areas of science and mathematics, ICT, hairdressing and beauty therapy and art, design, and multimedia. However, all curriculum areas have some good or better teaching. Generally, the planning and structure of lessons is good. In the better lessons, students

are actively and enthusiastically engaged. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods that stimulate learning. In provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, most tasks are broken down effectively into small sequential stages. Practical teaching is mostly good. In art and design, demonstrations are effective and in ICT students engage in good practical work. On some vocational courses, group work is effective. For example, in hairdressing and beauty therapy, able students are encouraged to support the less able students. In business, teachers take into account individual students' learning needs. Most students are enthusiastic and well motivated. In health and social care, students are keen to succeed and to make progress. Teachers give positive encouragement and are supportive in lessons. Teachers frequently check students' understanding and raise their aspirations by setting challenging targets. Many teachers make good use of question and answer techniques, and visual aids. In ESOL, teachers are skilled in developing oral communication and checking the accuracy and use of language structures.

16. Too few lessons are good are better. The weaker lessons are often characterised by a lack of innovation. In literacy and numeracy, schemes of work and lesson plans are standardised, but some lack a vocational context. In some lessons, students are not clear about what they were learning. Much poor attendance and punctuality generally hampers learning. In business, some able students are insufficiently challenged. In the less satisfactory ESOL lessons, there is an over-reliance on worksheets and a limited range of activities to enrich the learning experience. In some lessons, teachers miss opportunities to use ILT.

17. Most teachers are well qualified and experienced in their subject areas. The college directly employs 416 teachers. Almost three quarters of the full-time teachers and 82% of the part-time and fractional teachers hold or are working towards a teaching qualification. A large proportion of part-time teachers are supplied by a third-party provider. The proportion of teachers provided by a third party who hold or who are working towards teaching qualifications is 64%, which is significantly lower than the proportion of teachers employed directly by the college. Staff appraisal, review and development processes are good. Staff participate in a wide range of professional and personal development activities.

18. The college has been particularly successful in securing capital investment and other funding, with approximately £40 million invested in the last 10 years. Significant building improvements have either been made or plans to do so are at an advanced stage. For example, in partnership with the local education authority (LEA), a £6.1 million capital investment programme is shortly to commence at the Stratford campus. This is to replace specialist teaching facilities for students aged 14 to 19 and to improve construction facilities. Students with restricted mobility have good access to the college's accommodation and resources. The college's main campuses have accessible lifts.

19. Teaching takes place at a wide range of teaching venues. The college has two main campuses and nine community venues. Other teaching venues are provided through franchise arrangements. The maintenance of college buildings is particularly well managed. Work is planned over a 10-year period. Sub-contractors who provide services are closely monitored. Large contracts have monthly performance reviews. The teaching accommodation at most college campuses is well furnished with bright and clean decoration. The studios and workshops in art and media design are excellent. The workshops, laboratories, salons and nurseries in engineering, science and mathematics, hair and beauty and early years care are very good. The specialist equipment in these curriculum areas are modern and of the latest industry standard. However, a few lessons take place in classrooms that are cramped, overcrowded, noisy and arranged poorly. Written learning materials are mostly well designed and used effectively. The facilities available for independent learning sessions are good. At the two main college campuses, they enable quiet, group and facilitated learning in a range of room types. The college library, multi-media and intranet are used effectively by full-time students. In three curriculum areas, the college intranet system is well developed. Students are able to study away from the college sites. Those that miss lessons can access details of the lessons remotely. However, the intranet is still in a developmental stage for most curriculum areas.

20. The availability of learning resources is good. The ratio of computers to students is much better than the national average. Full-time students place high value on the unlimited access they have to the Internet. A wide range of ILT equipment is provided for teachers. For example, many classrooms at the main campuses have interactive whiteboards. However, in some areas, such as foundation,

and art and design, there is insufficient use of ILT resources. Whilst there is a development programme in place for staff in the use of ILT equipment, the take-up is slow.

21. Generally, assessments are well planned and rigorous. The policies and procedures on assessment and monitoring of students' progress are detailed, informative and comprehensive. The students' charter is prominently displayed and clearly states students' entitlement to fair assessment and constructive feedback within deadlines. Assessment schedules are produced before a course starts. Assignment briefs are checked by course teams before being used. Pre-entry initial screening of students' literacy and numeracy needs is effective for full-time students. Initial diagnostic online assessment is thorough and clearly identifies students' key skills levels and additional learning support needs. Students are recruited with integrity and the provision of identified support is prompt.

22. Assessment in lessons is effective in monitoring student understanding and identifying difficulties. Students on all courses are assessed every seven weeks. For NewCAD courses, this can lead to unit accreditation. Assignments briefs are clear and focused. Best assessment practice is where feedback is comprehensive, encouraging and clearly identifies strengths and weakness. However, in some areas, the feedback is not always sufficiently detailed. In construction, insufficient assessment takes place in the workplace. However, in railway engineering, qualified workplace assessors provide assessment on demand. External verifiers' reports confirm that internal verification meets awarding bodies' requirements. External verifier reports are closely monitored by senior managers to ensure that necessary actions are completed. Internal verification is rigorous and involves both the review of assessments and the observation of assessors. The college has employed two internal verifiers to implement changes and establish standardisation. However, the internal verification records are not always fully completed and records are not always signed or dated. Weaknesses in assessment practice are identified and addressed by internal verification panels. Action plans are monitored effectively.

23. During induction, teachers assess students' learning styles. However, the results from these activities are not always used effectively to plan lessons or meet individual learning needs. Satisfactory systems are in place to track and monitor individual students' progress. Student reviews take place every seventh week and involve the student learning adviser, the student and relevant teachers. These identify students who are not achieving their targets and require additional support. In the best examples, students learning plans are monitored frequently and targets are reviewed in the light of assessments. However, some individual learning plans remain too general and often show long-term aims rather than addressing points for shorter-term action. Value added data is used to inform target setting, but only for GCE A-level students. Reports to employers are detailed and helpful. However, reports to parents and guardians of full-time students are brief and very general.

24. The college serves a community that experiences high levels of socio-economic deprivation and that has a rich mix of minority ethnic groups. Most potential students have low levels of prior achievement or were educated overseas. A significant proportion of students are refugees and asylum seekers. To meet the diverse needs of the community, the college has designed and implemented the innovative NewCAD curriculum framework. It is carefully designed to enable students to follow accredited units of learning at different levels, full time or part time, from entry level to level 3. NewCAD programmes can be flexibly designed to meet individual students' needs and provide credit for partial achievement. This highly effective curriculum initiative is at the heart of the college's strategy to widen participation and raise local skills levels. One third of students follow courses within the NewCAD foundation framework. However, although the programmes are accredited through OCN, some students remain concerned about the value of NewCAD qualifications outside of the college and for employment. The college is aware of these concerns and is involved in developments that may lead to a national accreditation framework similar to NewCAD. The college also offers a broad range of courses, from entry level to HE in 11 of the 14 areas of learning. Internal progression routes from entry level upwards are good in most curriculum areas. Much provision is linked to vocational training supported by literacy, numeracy and ESOL teaching. Work-based learning apprenticeships are offered in construction and engineering, and in a small number of other vocational areas.

25. The college has developed highly effective strategic partnerships. These are effective in promoting the widening participation agenda. They include: Newham LEA, business links, the

chamber of commerce, schools and the Prince's Trust. Many partner links have led to the development of new provision. The resulting offer has extended community and employer access to relevant learning opportunities. The imaginative 'Testbed' project for example, has 149 school pupils aged 14 to 16 from 9 local schools, attending the college every week. To supplement their predicted general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) grades D to G the college provides a NewCAD part-time vocational programme together with study skills. The outcomes so far are very positive. The college has excellent links and provides good progression routes to three London universities.

26. The college makes a significant contribution to local regeneration. The centre for innovation and partnerships is successful and very active. Work to support local businesses is outstanding. For example, capacity building small and micro businesses and meeting skills shortages in the construction and engineering industries. The college has been awarded CoVE status in three areas. These are: a joint award with another local college for training local small businesses; railway engineering; and in textiles and fashion for its work with the Asian community. They are already having impact. For example, the very successful 'Asian Dream' exhibitions and catwalk shows give local fashion and jewellery businesses the chance to promote themselves to a wide audience. Local employers speak highly of the college's services. Franchise provision is well managed. It provides a good range of work-based learning, literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses.

27. The college's enrichment programme provides a very good range of activities appropriate to the needs of the culturally diverse population. Student participation is satisfactory. Course-specific enrichment activities are well established in most curriculum areas. The teaching of key skills is variable. On a few courses, key skills are well integrated and learning is effective. However, few students take the opportunity to gain accreditation for the achievement of key skills. The late introduction of key skills into the construction apprenticeships has resulted in too few students gaining the full framework.

28. Support for students is good. Pre-entry guidance is comprehensive and impartial. Professionally produced publicity materials are circulated widely. They contain clear information about courses and the range of support services available. Information is provided in a variety of formats on request. The college guidance procedures have been nationally accredited. Initial assessment for full-time students usually takes place prior to interview. Information is used effectively to guide students to the most appropriate course and level. During induction, full-time students take diagnostic tests which identify their level of key skills and learning support needs. Results are circulated quickly to course teams and student learning advisors. Support plans are agreed with students. Induction is used effectively to confirm students' choice of course and level. The process provides a good introduction to college facilities, course requirements and to the support services available to students. In most curriculum areas, the results of initial assessment are used well to plan for individual needs. However, this is not always true on literacy, numeracy, foundation studies and ESOL courses.

29. The college provides a wide range of additional support services. These include welfare, counselling, finance, careers and progression guidance and student mentors. Students value independent study sessions which are clearly linked to course assignments. They are strongly encouraged to develop independent study skills. Part-time students also have timetabled resource based learning sessions.

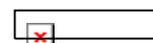
30. Learning support is offered to all students with identified learning needs. The effectiveness of support provided is monitored by college managers. Approximately 80% of students identified with additional needs take up the support offered. Generally, retention and pass rates for students who receive support are higher than the college average. Childcare support is very good. It is provided through college nurseries, partnership arrangements and the funding of third party childcare where needed. Support for students with hearing impairments is very good. The flexible design of the NewCAD curriculum ensures that appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy and language support are available in most curriculum areas. However, the provision of support is not consistent across all areas.

31. Tutorial provision for full-time students is centrally organised. The provision is well structured with regular group and individual tutorials. Full-time students have a learning advisor who provides good pastoral and academic support. Learning advisors have detailed schemes of work for group

tutorials. The tutorial sessions are well planned with structured activities. In most areas, communications between learning advisors and teachers are effective. Guidelines for tutorial provision for part-time students are clear, but students' experience of tutorials varies from good to poor. Procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are clear, but the system is not effective. Student attendance and punctuality remain poor in many areas. The college has a child protection policy and a detailed guide for staff. The manager for supporting students with disabilities has overall responsibility for co-ordinating internal actions and liaising with external agencies. Training for over 120 staff has developed a good understanding of correct procedures.

32. Student learning advisors provide good support for students' wishing to progress to HE and employment. In addition, information and guidance is provided by the college careers officer and the Connexions Service. The library has an adequate range of information on careers and progression to employment and HE.

Leadership and management



33. Leadership and management are good. The college has made good progress in addressing many of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Retention and pass rates are improving and in most cases are at or above the national average. The proportion of teaching judged to be good or better has steadily improved, although this is still 5% below the national average. Management information is accurate and regularly used to improve quality. Student attendance remains a weakness, at 11% below the national average. Student numbers are increasing as the college responds positively to the needs of the very diverse local community.

34. The college benefits from strong and effective leadership from the principal, senior managers and governors. They have prioritised continuous improvement and meeting the varied and substantial educational needs of the local community. Innovative curriculum leadership has created a range of provision which includes one of the most developed examples of a credit framework curriculum in the country. This has been developed in response to the high levels of social and educational disadvantage experienced by the local community. Strategic plans set a clear direction for the college to enable it to deliver its values and priorities. The plans are understood and supported by staff. Managers use resources effectively to develop all activities likely to contribute to student success.

35. Governors have a good understanding of the college strategic plans and are very involved in their creation and approval. They set challenging but realistic targets for student success, as well as for the corporate performance of the college. The academic standards and performance committee evaluates student success thoroughly. Improvement strategies are included in subsequent action plans. Governors are representative of the local community, and bring considerable skills that benefit the college.

36. The college has developed an outstanding and very productive range of external partnerships. Many relate to the significant local regeneration agenda, supporting work with local communities. Considerable additional external funding has been secured over the last decade. Through partnership activities with local schools, 366 school pupils aged 14 to 16 take part in courses at the college. The college has recently been awarded a government grant of £6.1 million under the 'Schools for the Future' programme.

37. Curriculum management is good. College managers have developed NewCAD, a modular and flexible range of unitised courses over many years. The provision now accounts for approximately two thirds of total taught hours. To counter years of poor achievements managers have effectively converted many long courses into a series of NewCAD units. The impact is dramatic. Curriculum management is good in art and design, hairdressing and beauty therapy, science and mathematics and in programmes for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. It is satisfactory in most

other areas. A comprehensive schedule of meetings is used well throughout the college. The management of franchised programmes is very effective. It has resulted in the removal of some organisations due to poor student performance. The management of some courses in business studies is unsatisfactory, with some ineffective timetabling of lessons. It is also unsatisfactory in aspects of work-based learning, for example, poor management of assessment processes.

38. The college has comprehensive and well-planned arrangements for quality assurance. These cover all aspects of the college including subcontractors and agency staff. The systems are appropriately supported by clear schedules for each activity, and data on student performance. Good progress has been made in many areas of the college to make quality assurance mechanisms more effective in raising standards. However, they have yet to fully impact on some aspects of the provision. In the more successful areas, all staff are involved in the processes. Target setting is good and regular use is made of management information to evaluate student performance. Clear action plans are monitored rigorously by managers. The quality assurance of franchised provision is particularly robust. However, in work-based learning in engineering and in ESOL, the quality assurance processes are not fully effective. The college has systems to address unsatisfactory student attendance and punctuality, but these have not yet been successful. In general, the college's self-assessment report is realistic and leads to appropriate action plans. However, some of the strengths are overstated. Inspectors graded three areas of learning one grade lower than the college, and one area one grade higher.

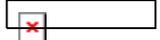
39. The new, well-resourced lesson observation system is thorough. It engages teaching staff effectively in a meaningful dialogue about raising standards in teaching and learning. In many curriculum areas, the system is leading to improved standards of teaching. In a few areas, however, insufficient consideration is given to the impact of teaching on learning. Some lesson grades are unrealistically high. In 2002/03, the college observation grade profile closely matched the outcome of the inspection. However, in 2003/04 and up to the time of the inspection, college grades for good or better lessons were much higher.

40. Staff appraisal is good and effectively links to staff development. It is valued by staff and used appropriately to identify development needs. The staff development programme is very effective and well used. Its design is carefully matched to the strategic priorities of the college.

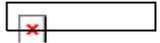
41. The college promotion of equality and diversity is good. It has comprehensive policies and action plans. The college has an inclusive ethos where students are welcome, feel safe, valued and supported. Students from minority ethnic groups account for 63% of college population, accurately reflecting the local community. College employees also mirror the people of Newham. For example, the proportion of staff and managers from black minority ethnic groups is 53% and 33%, respectively. The college provides a wide range of curriculum opportunities for people who would otherwise be underrepresented in education and training. Students' performance is routinely monitored according to ethnicity, gender and age. Action plans include issues identified during course reviews. Coursework often provides opportunities for students to reflect on issues of equality and diversity. The college complies with its duties under the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. It has made good progress implementing the college's racial equality action plan. It also complies with the anticipatory requirements of SENDA. The great majority of its buildings are accessible to people with restricted mobility. Many staff, managers and governors have undertaken training in relation to their responsibilities.

42. The college provides good value for money. The number of students is steadily increasing. Most pass rates are at or above the national average and improving. The college is very successful in attracting substantial additional funding. This is used well to support learning in a variety of locations and for improving the college facilities. The average class size observed during the inspection was 12, which is higher than the national average of 10. The college regularly reviews the cost effectiveness of aspects of its operation. It is in financially good health according to the definition used by the LSC.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Science and mathematics



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on AS-level and GCE A-level courses
- much good teaching
- rigorous assessment and tracking of students' work
- very supportive learning environment.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory attendance on intermediate-level courses
- insufficient use of IT in lessons.

Scope of provision

43. Based at the Stratford campus, the college offers science and mathematics courses at intermediate level and advanced level. At time of the inspection, 38 students were following a combination of GCSE biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics. At the same intermediate level, 45 students were following the NewCAD provision. Biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics subjects are offered at AS level and GCE A level. During the inspection, there were 86 students following AS-level courses and 58 attending the GCE A-level programme. The Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) national certificate in applied science course is new this year and has 22 students. Courses are run in the daytime and are attended by students aged 16 to 18 and adults. Only GCSE mathematics is offered in the evening.

Achievement and standards

44. Pass rates in AS-level and GCE A-level biology, chemistry and physics have improved over the last three years to well above the national averages. The pass rate in GCE A-level physics was 100% in both 2002/03 and 2003/04. The pass rate in AS-level mathematics was significantly above the national average for the last three years. The proportions of higher grades in AS-level biology and chemistry are lower than the national averages, especially in 2003/04. Students on the GCE A-level programmes show good progress relative to their prior achievements. Retention rates in GCSE, AS-level and GCE A-level science and mathematics subjects have risen over the last three years and exceed national averages. Progression rates from AS level to GCE A level are low.

45. In science lessons, students achieve high standards of practical, observational and analytical skills. In a GCE A-level chemistry lesson, students showed a high level of competence when investigating properties of halogens. Students in a GCSE physics lesson used electrical meters effectively and accurately displayed measurements on a graph. Most students gain confidence in lessons and learn how to apply their knowledge. At 68%, the attendance in intermediate level classes is unsatisfactory.

A sample of retention and pass rates in science and mathematics, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GCSE biology	2	No. of starts	47	41	36
		% retention	77	71	81
		% pass rate	44	62	52
GCSE mathematics	2	No. of starts	449	59	61
		% retention	52	76	75
		% pass rate	32	33	57
AS-level mathematics	3	No. of starts	119	100	95
		% retention	77	88	91
		% pass rate	62	72	74
AS-level physics	3	No. of starts	38	32	30
		% retention	79	72	80
		% pass rate	53	74	88
GCE A-level biology	3	No. of starts	29	36	35
		% retention	97	97	97
		% pass rate	75	83	97
GCE A-level chemistry	3	No. of starts	35	35	38
		% retention	100	100	97
		% pass rate	89	94	92

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

Quality of education and training

46. Much teaching is good. Teachers give positive encouragement and are supportive to students in lessons. The relationships teachers have with students are very good and help to increase learners' self-confidence. Schemes of work are clear and comprehensive. Most lessons have a suitable range of activities. In a minority of lessons, teaching lacks variety. In most lessons, teachers make insufficient use of IT. In an AS-level biology lesson, students analysed case studies enabling them to

suggest factors that may contribute to the onset of different cancers. In another lesson, GCSE chemistry students drew appropriate conclusions from displacement reactions that involved metals. Students in GCSE mathematics develop good manipulative skills when solving linear equations using algebraic expressions.

47. Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subjects and are well qualified and experienced. They benefit from a wide and appropriate range of professional development. Science and mathematics teachers are active in the creation of online support materials for their students. Science is taught in a suite of well-resourced laboratories. Technical support is very good. Mathematics rooms are often dull and have insufficient display material to enrich the learning environment. In these rooms, student work is not displayed. The library at the Stratford site has a good range of books to support science and mathematics courses. Quiet areas for private study are well used. A separate dedicated area offering additional support is very well resourced and provides skills development in numeracy and communication.

48. Assessment in lessons is very effective. Teachers monitor carefully students' understanding and identify difficulties. Written and practical work is mostly assessed rigorously. Written feedback to students is constructive and allows them to know what they need to do to improve their work. Tracking of progress is good in all areas and teachers keep exemplary records. Students' individual learning plans show mainly long-term aims rather than identifying targets for shorter-term action. Feedback on the biology and physics assessments on the NewCAD programme lacks sufficient detail.

49. The range of GCSE, AS-level and GCE A-level subjects is wide. The NewCAD programme at level 2 is offered as an alternative to GCSE science subjects. Many students progress from the NewCAD provision on to advanced level sciences or mathematics subjects. The national certificate in science course is offered for students aiming for a medical-based career. Key skills opportunities exist, but they are not taken up by many students. Schemes of work in science and mathematics do not show opportunities for the development of key skills. Teachers do not refer to key skills in lessons.

50. Students use and value highly the independent study system operated by the college. This enables students easy access to scientific and mathematical resource materials. This system complements the students' main programmes and is part of their timetable. An effective induction week for full-time students includes the assessment of students' additional support needs. The additional support centre provides effective literacy and communications guidance. Students see this as a part of their main programme and have the opportunity to develop these skills within a scientific framework. A student learning advisor meets weekly with each student to monitor academic progress, support needs and attendance.

Leadership and management

51. Leadership and management are good. Lines of responsibility are clear and teachers understand their roles. The curriculum area is well led and managed. The self-assessment report identifies most weaknesses and the action plan identifies realistic targets for improvement. The NewCAD level 2 science programme, is a good example of continuous course development. However, the range of part-time and vocational provision is narrow and no strategy exists to increase this. Course teams meet regularly. General learning area reviews are good, but subject reviews often lack clear action points.

Construction



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

Strengths

- high pass rates on NVQ programmes

- effective strategies to improve retention rates

- good initiatives to meet students' and employers' needs.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching of theory

- poor achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks

- unsatisfactory completion of key skills qualifications.

Scope of provision

52. The college offers a range of qualifications from entry level to level 3. The provision includes national certificate and diploma qualifications in plumbing, heating and ventilating, electrical installation, domestic heating. A subcontractor provides a range of multi-skills courses to address the needs of local industry. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,719 students following construction programmes. Of these, 144 were full time, 715 were part time and following day-release programmes or attending evening provision and 138 were work-based learners. An additional 722 students followed training provided by the college's subcontractor.

Achievement and standards

53. Overall retention and pass rates are satisfactory. Retention rates on level 1 programmes have improved significantly since the introduction of NewCAD programmes. In 2003/04, for example, the retention rates for students aged 16 to 18 rose by 14 percentage points to 79% if compared with the previous year. NVQ pass rates are good, particularly for level 2 plumbing and level 3 heating, both well above the national averages. Student progress and standards of work are satisfactory. However, many students with a low starting point develop good practical skills. Attendance is poor on some courses. The average attendance rate during the inspection was below the national average.

54. Pass rates for students on modern apprenticeship frameworks are poor. Although many learners were transferees from other underperforming providers, their progress together with more recent recruits has been very slow. Many learners are now well past their projected completion date. Most still have significant amounts of the work to complete. Only two learners have achieved a full

framework since 2000. The achievement of key skills is poor. Many work-based learners eventually complete most elements of their modern apprenticeship framework except for key skills. In some cases, this has adversely affected learners' terms and conditions at work. Students in their first year now receive key skills training and assessment promptly.

A sample of retention and pass rates in construction, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
City and Guilds 6988 plumbing	entry	No. of starts	40	164	53
		% retention	38	80	87
		% pass rate	80	77	57
City and Guilds 2360/06 part 1	1	No. of starts	114	83	82
		% retention	40	41	67
		% pass rate	98	94	89
NVQ plumbing	2	No. of starts	134	129	68
		% retention	32	47	62
		% pass rate	84	82	95
NVQ heating and ventilation	2	No. of starts	63	45	16
		% retention	40	73	75
		% pass rate	48	64	83
City and Guilds 2360/05 part 2 theory	2	No. of starts	55	56	36
		% retention	64	79	73
		% pass rate	97	89	49
NVQ heating and ventilation	3	No. of starts	36	25	19
		% retention	100	60	44
		% pass rate	44	80	80
National certificate in civil engineering	3	No. of starts	22	30	15
		% retention	36	33	46
		% pass rate	88	92	80

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

Quality of education and training

55. Teaching is mostly satisfactory or better. In practical lessons, teachers plan well and include a range of activities that maintain students' interest. In the better theory lessons, teachers keep students interested by involving them in lively discussions. Students are encouraged to share their experiences. In one lesson on health and safety, the teacher used question and answer techniques effectively to enliven learning. Students were able to explore through discussion the purpose and nature of risk assessments. A number of students brought in items of safety clothing and equipment to share with the rest of the group. The teacher successfully used these to reinforce the consequences of failure to wear appropriate personal protective equipment. In unsatisfactory lessons, too many of the activities are dominated by the teacher and students lose interest. In one lesson, several students were left unsupervised for a long time. They made very slow progress and did not complete their set tasks. Two lessons observed were unsatisfactory and the number of good or better lessons was below the national average.

56. Resources are satisfactory. Workshops in plumbing and electrical installation are spacious, with an adequate range of tools, specialist equipment and consumable materials. Facilities provided by the college's subcontractor are also satisfactory. The Stratford campus is shortly to undergo a major building-refurbishment programme that will further improve the workshops and classrooms. Teachers are suitably qualified or are working towards teaching qualifications and assessor awards. Most areas are generally well staffed, although there is significant reliance on the use of part-time teachers. Teachers do not have adequate time to visit work-based learners in the workplace. The learning resource centre has a suitable range of textbooks and computers. The construction school is developing a good range of online learning materials. These are mainly used by full-time students.

57. Most students' progress reviews are carried out by the college subcontractor. Reviews are generally well structured with a good emphasis on health and safety and progress at work. Targets are set and progress towards them monitored. However, the flow of information between the college and reviewers is often poor. Reviewers sometimes do not have sufficient information to gain a full understanding of students past achievements. There is insufficient assessment of learners work in the workplace. Teaching staff in most areas do not regularly visit learners to validate the evidence learners collect and to meet with employers. Too many learners make slow progress. Internal verification practice is satisfactory. Portfolios are carefully reviewed and assessors are observed.

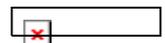
58. The provision offered meets the needs of students and local industry. In particular, the flexibility of the NewCAD provision has had a significant impact. Full-time students, with the exception of those following national diploma courses, all follow the NewCAD programmes. Using NewCAD, the college can create programmes that take account of individual students' vocational, basis skills or language needs. Many students progress from the NewCAD programme on to NVQ courses. Students who cannot be placed on a college course are directed to private providers. Collaborative arrangements are effective. Private providers are encouraged to offer courses not available at the college. For example, the provision of multi-skills training for school caretakers.

59. Support for students is satisfactory. Initial assessment tests are used effectively to identify additional learning needs. Progress towards targets is well monitored. Support for learners at work is good. Employers are informed of their learners' progress and they provide learners with appropriate tasks at work. Students who need additional help with numeracy and literacy do not receive sufficient support in lessons. Few teachers have effective teaching strategies that combine occupational learning and the support needed. However, some good materials are available. Group and individual tutorials are effective. Assistance for learners' who have English as a second language is good. Most courses have a large proportion of students from minority ethnic groups. Teaching strategies are adjusted, and students are given extra time to complete written work.

Leadership and management

60. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Generally, arrangements for quality assuring the provision and particularly the work of subcontracted providers are effective. In the recent past, the performance of several of subcontractors was poor. Communication is generally good. Monitoring arrangements include lesson observations, analysis of retention and pass rate data and frequent internal verification panels to validate the assessment process. The self-assessment report was mostly accurate. Inspectors agreed with the majority of the judgements, but weaknesses in the work-based learning provision were understated. Teachers, support staff and subcontracted providers were not sufficiently involved in compiling the report. The arrangements for supporting new members of staff are good. Providers' staff are encouraged to take part in college training activities. Staff development opportunities and specialist training are good. However, they have yet to improve the many theory lessons that are often dull and uninteresting.

Engineering and railway engineering



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Contributory grade for work-based learning is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on most courses

- good development of students' practical skills

- much good teaching and learning for adult students

- good learning resources

- good working partnership with railway employers

- good support for work-based students.

Weaknesses

- inadequate work-based student progress reviews

- insufficient quality assurance of work-based learning.

Scope of provision

61. The college provides a range of courses from entry level to level 3 in mechanical engineering, electronics, motor vehicle, welding and computer-aided design. There are 464 students following college-based provision. Of these, 209 follow part-time courses and 255 follow full-time programmes. Some 53 school pupils attend a college-devised programme for part of each week. The college is a CoVE in rail engineering maintenance. Nine students follow NVQ level 2 programmes and six follow level 3 qualifications in rail transport engineering. There are 60 advanced apprentices in engineering maintenance of which 49 are employed in the railway industry. A further 11 are in the print industry. Off-the-job teaching takes place in the workplace and is taught by college staff.

Achievement and standards

62. Retention and pass rates on most courses are above the national averages and improving. For example, over the last two years, the retention rate on the national certificate in engineering rose from 45% to 89%, some 36% above the national average. Pass rates on the motor vehicle servicing level 2 award, rose from 58% in 2001/2002 and to 75% in 2003/04, some 30% above the national average. Retention rates on apprentice programmes are also high. However, the achievement of key skills is poor and few learners who started since 2000 have achieved a full apprenticeship framework. Since 2001, students are now expected to complete their key skills whilst working towards their level 2 NVQ in engineering.

63. Students make good progress and develop good practical skills. For example, in rail transport engineering maintenance, many students start with little or no practical skills. Most soon learn how to carry out highly skilled maintenance tasks. The majority were previously employed as non-skilled labour. A large proportion of students achieve NVQ levels 2 and 3 qualifications and progress to skilled engineer status. They are well motivated, enthusiastic and enjoy their training. Welding students achieve high standards of work and produce quality welds that meet industrial standards.

A sample of retention and pass rates in engineering and railway engineering, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ vehicle fitting	1	No. of starts	78	48	112
		% retention	99	96	99
		% pass rate	44	100	91
City and Guilds 3267 introductory welding skills	1	No. of starts	76	67	79
		% retention	79	81	89
		% pass rate	83	93	96
City and Guilds 6956 progression award in motor vehicle servicing	2	No. of starts	26	19	22
		% retention	73	95	91
		% pass rate	58	78	75
City and Guilds 4351 computer-aided drafting	2	No. of starts	40	40	22
		% retention	78	43	73
		% pass rate	48	94	81
NVQ performing engineering operations	2	No. of starts	*	46	35
		% retention	*	93	91
		% pass rate	*	84	100
National certificate in engineering	3	No. of starts	44	24	**
		% retention	45	54	**
		% pass rate	65	100	**

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

*course did not run

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

64. Much of the adult teaching at the college is good, but there is some unsatisfactory teaching at employers' training centres. In the better lessons, planning is good. Teachers set clear objectives

that are achievable and relevant. They use a wide range of teaching methods, including ICT and audio visual aids, to maintain student interest and to improve learning experience. Students' understanding is frequently checked through effective use of direct, open questions. Students are enthusiastic and respond positively. Teachers use their own industrial experience effectively to explain the application of theory in the workplace. The weaker lessons are characterised by a lack of students' engagement and poor punctuality that causes disruption. The teaching of key skills is satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught as an integral part of the NewCAD provision at level 1 and 2. Key skills communication for level 3 courses is taught in separate lessons by a central teaching team who work in liaison with the engineering curriculum teams.

65. Teachers have up-to-date industrial knowledge which is reflected in their practical teaching. Most classrooms are well furnished, spacious and create a good learning environment. The supported independent learning facility enables students to have good access to ICT. The facility is well used and highly valued by students. The college resources for rail engineering maintenance courses are good. The scaled model railway used to train students on diagnosing signalling equipment faults, implementing railway safety rules and mastering speed control systems is very good. The college has plans to develop a work area so that a permanent rail track can be maintained. Employers provide good workplace resources and classroom facilities for off-the-job training. Classrooms are equipped with high-technology electronic circuit boards. These are linked to computers that students use to learn and practice diagnostic railway signalling systems skills.

66. Railway companies employ their own qualified assessors. They provide students with assessment on demand and at times that fit in with their work pattern. Assessment planning and the monitoring of student progress are good. Motor vehicle students are set challenging targets for practical tasks and assignments. Verbal feedback is good, but there are no written comments on marked work. There is insufficient involvement of workplace supervisors and assessors in student progress reviews. They are not always involved in discussions with tutors or students, or in setting action plans and targets for students. Many reports do not include comments from assessors on student performance. There are insufficient connections between old and new progress reviews. It is often difficult to establish if action plans identified at earlier reviews are achieved. Action plans are weak and targets are not sufficiently challenging. There is little reference to on-the-job training. Students' understanding of equality of opportunity is insufficiently developed. Most learners do not understand the NVQ appeals and grievance procedures.

67. The college has developed good partnership working and close liaison with employers. The work-based training that is provided supports the demands of the rail industry. The college has assisted employers in developing and adding resources to their classrooms and training centres. College staff meet regularly with employers to discuss student progress and future developments of the rail industry. The engineering maintenance qualification is the first opportunity many students have ever had to achieve a nationally recognised qualification. However, there are limited opportunities at the college for students to progress to level 3 provision. For example, there are no opportunities for motor vehicle students to progress from the level 2 awards to level 3.

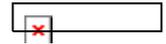
68. Students receive good guidance prior to choosing a college programme. It is based on effective initial assessment and detailed personal information. The results of initial assessment are used to identify learning support needs. Support is good, but not always provided quickly enough. The personal tutor meets with students who are a cause for concern, but individual tutorials are not routinely available. College staff make regular visits to students in the workplace. They give effective support and help students to identify suitable sources of evidence. When teachers attend off-the-job training sessions in the workplace they provide literacy and numeracy support. Students value this support as it assists them to make good progress.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff at all levels are involved in a thorough self-assessment process. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. The lesson observation scheme at the college is thorough and rigorous. Teaching and learning are improving steadily. Most staff attend a good range of staff training and development events. The development of the curriculum is good, constantly evolving and is responsive to changing external

requirements. The CoVE is well managed and meets the needs of students, employers and fulfils the CoVE criteria. The quality assurance arrangements for monitoring teaching, learning, and student progress reviews in the workplace are inadequate. Internal verification on railway engineering maintenance and motor vehicle programmes is weak. There is insufficient planning for sampling portfolios or assessor observations. Motor vehicle assessors have not been observed for more than 18 months. Internal verifier feedback reports to rail transport engineering assessors are insufficiently individualised.

Business administration, management and professional services



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- high retention rates

- high pass rates for Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX) legal secretaries and Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) intermediate accounting courses

- good accountancy teaching

- very effective learning support.

Weaknesses

- poor attendance

- insufficient variety of teaching and learning strategies

- poor management of a minority of short and part-time courses

- insufficient availability of independent learning resources for part-time students.

Scope of provision

70. The college offers courses in management and professional services, business and book-keeping. General national vocational qualification (GNVQ) and advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) courses were recently replaced with NewCAD programme. In business, NewCAD has three entry level courses and progression routes up to level 2. Successful students can follow a modularised BTEC national level qualification. The management and professional programmes are offered mainly on a part-time basis. They include management and professional certificates and diplomas, and legal secretaries and accounting qualifications. The college's provision also includes a range of short part-time courses such as call handling and word processing. Many part-time and short courses are taught in community centres. The college has recently been awarded funding to develop a CoVE in business and financial services, in partnership with a separate college that is the lead. During the inspection 1,185 students were following courses, 600 of whom were full time and 585 part time.

Achievement and standards

71. Retention rates have improved on most courses and are now above the national averages. NewCAD courses have much better retention rates than the courses they replaced. For example, in 2002/03, the retention rate on the GNVQ business course was 52% compared with a national average of 56%. The retention rate for the equivalent NewCAD level 2 course in 2003/04 was 97%. Pass rates are well above the national average on the ILEX legal secretaries and AAT intermediate accounting programmes. However, pass rates on AAT foundation courses declined in 2003/04 to below the national average.

72. Many students develop good additional skills in communication and presentation. These are above the requirements for their qualifications and prepare them well for entry to business and professional careers. Student portfolio work is of a high standard. Many students undertake additional research activities and practise new skills in their own time. Tutorials are used effectively to develop learning skills. Attendance is poor on many courses. The average attendance rate during inspection was 66% and the lowest was 50%; well below the national averages.

A sample of retention and pass rates in business administration, management and professional services, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Call handling	2	No. of starts	141	590	334
		% retention	89	78	93
		% pass rate	94	86	75
ILEX legal secretaries certificate (1 year)	2	No. of starts	**	31	17
		% retention	**	71	82
		% pass rate	**	91	100
AAT foundation	2	No. of starts	59	161	85
		% retention	60	67	72
		% pass rate	85	89	72
AVCE business (double award)	3	No. of starts	34	98	48
		% retention	91	44	85
		% pass rate	61	79	76
AAT intermediate	3	No. of starts	22	104	102
		% retention	77	65	85

		% pass rate	82	75	82
IPD certificate in personnel practice	3	No. of starts	36	*	46
		% retention	58	*	78
		% pass rate	86	*	83

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* course did not run

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

73. Teaching in accounting is good. The three AAT programmes are successful in helping students to develop their accountancy skills. Lively and participative approaches to teaching engage students in learning. Students enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastic in their studies. All lessons are well planned and well structured. Teachers frequently test students' understanding. They raise students' aspirations by setting demanding targets which are mostly achieved. Accountancy students have a wide range of prior attainment. Many need literacy and numeracy support. Teachers take account of students' individual learning styles in their lesson plans. However, in a significant number of other business lessons, teachers use too narrow a range of teaching and learning strategies. These lessons do not meet the needs of students with different abilities.

74. Assessment is satisfactory. Assignments are well marked, returned promptly and the feedback is helpful. Students are given clear directions in the assignment briefs. They know what they have to do to achieve. Initial and diagnostic tests for full-time students are satisfactory, but are not used to inform teaching in some lessons. Part-time students have an initial assessment of their numeracy and literacy skills. However, there is no subsequent diagnostic testing. Students' progress is closely monitored in accounting.

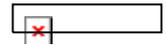
75. The range of courses offered meets the needs of students and local employers effectively. The provision provides good progression routes that lead to business and professional careers. The college has developed innovative OCN accredited courses to meet the needs of business students at different entry levels. These NewCAD programmes enable students to progress from entry level 1 through to nationally accredited courses at levels 3 and 4. The provision is flexible and more able students are fast-tracked through to higher-level courses. A good range of short courses is provided for local employers including NVQs in call handling.

76. The learning support for full-time students is good. Students' learning needs are assessed at entry. Those who need support receive it. Learning support activities are included in course timetables. Student learning advisers and supported independent study sessions for full-time students are highly valued by learners. The system of peer support where more experienced students work alongside less-experienced students is effective. Part-time students are not allocated student learning adviser.

77. Resources are satisfactory. Rooms are well furnished and adequately equipped with audio-visual facilities. The resources are well used. Teaching rooms are well decorated, clean and tidy. Students have appropriate access to computing equipment on the main campuses. Course materials and assignments are accessed remotely through the virtual learning environment. The IT suite is well equipped. The opening times for the library are restricted. Part-time evening students find difficulty in using the full range of resources. Some rooms are used inappropriately. For example, some classrooms are too small for the size of the group. In other lessons, students' vision is restricted when whole-class teaching takes place in an IT suite. Teachers are appropriately qualified in their subject area and most have teaching qualifications. Most have relevant teaching and industrial experience. Teacher-training targets and deadlines are set for all new staff without such qualifications.

78. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Internal verification is satisfactory and includes all the necessary elements. Course teams meet regularly and programmes are reviewed on a regular basis. The results of these reviews are used to inform faculty quality meetings. Feedback from students is collected on a regular basis. The provision for key skills support is satisfactory for full-time students, but not for part-time students. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively. The teaching staff backgrounds reflect the diversity of the student body. The management of some courses is unsatisfactory. Not all part-time students have an effective induction. Timetable and staff changes are frequent. The complaints procedure is not working effectively. Monitoring of teaching is inconsistent and not all provision is quality assured appropriately.

Information and communications technology



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- much good teaching and learning
- improving retention rates on most courses to above national averages
- high standards of students' work
- very wide range of courses
- comprehensive student support for full-time students
- good management of franchised provision.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on most nationally recognised level 1 courses
- poor student attendance and punctuality

- inappropriate teaching accommodation at the two main sites.

Scope of provision

79. The ICT provision ranges from entry level to level 3 and includes courses for ICT users and practitioners. Courses at entry level, level 1 and 2 are offered as part of the suite of NewCAD qualifications. The level 3 course offer includes a national certificate and a range of practitioner programmes such as CISCO. Most full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Full-time courses are offered at the two main campuses. At the time of inspection, there were 687 students following these programmes. Most of the 246 part-time students attend the college during the evening. In addition, there were 747 students following franchised courses and 316 students attending courses at community venues.

Achievement and standards

80. Overall retention and pass rates are satisfactory. The retention rates for most courses have improved from well below national averages to above. The average retention rate for the NewCAD courses in 2003/04 was 95%. The pass rates on nationally recognised qualifications at level 1 were historically poor. However, most of these were replaced by NewCAD courses in 2003/04. The average pass rate on the NewCAD units at level 1 in 2003/04, for example, was 93%.

81. The standard of students' work is high. Across the curriculum area, work produced in lessons is good. Students demonstrate effective ICT, problem-solving and teamwork skills. Most students' assignments meet demanding assessment criteria well. Students show good independent studying skills. The support offered by ICT tutors working with basic skills practitioners encourages students to improve their literacy, numeracy and language skills. Students benefit from independent study in supported learning environments. Students' attendance is poor and many students are late for lessons.

A sample of retention and pass rates in information and communications technology, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate for IT users (new CLAIT - short)	1	No. of starts	*	749	363
		% retention	*	85	97
		% pass rate	*	22	80
City and Guilds 4248 - Start IT	1	No. of starts	256	365	16
		% retention	82	85	88
		% pass rate	47	44	21
European computer driving licence (ECDL) (short)	2	No. of starts	*	132	229
		% retention	*	95	100
		% pass rate	*	29	21
Integrated business technology stage 2 (short)	2	No. of starts	454	77	45
		% retention	85	87	93
		% pass rate	59	16	52
National award for IT	3	No. of starts	168	61	56

development (national certificate prior to 2003/04)		% pass rate	54	92	67
AVCE ICT (double award)	3	No. of starts	60	272	86
		% retention	93	33	59
		% pass rate	0	73	80

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* course did not run

Quality of education and training

82. Teaching and learning are good. Most lesson plans are well designed and contain detailed learning outcomes. Teaching is consistently clear and concise. Question and answer techniques are used to extend and reinforce learning effectively by checking on understanding. Visual aids including data projectors and interactive whiteboards are used well. For example, in a lesson on producing graphical images using a spreadsheet, an interactive whiteboard was used to particularly good effect. Teachers use a range of teaching methods and differentiate these according to students' needs. Everyday objects and imagery are used effectively to explain complex concepts. Lessons are stimulating and motivate students to achieve. One-to-one coaching is particularly effective and teachers frequently check students' work in lessons. Students participate well in discussions, analysis and self-evaluation. Students enjoy and do well in lessons that include a significant amount of practical work. The work students produce in lessons and assignments is of a high standard. In a minority of lessons, teachers talk too much and miss opportunities to gain information from the students.

83. Overall college resources for ICT are satisfactory. Computer hardware is modern and of industry standard. Sufficient workstations are available for each student in lessons. The availability of computers for independent study outside the classroom is good. However, at the two main college campuses, one IT suite and three classrooms are cramped and noisy and students easily become distracted.

84. Assessment and verification procedures are satisfactory. In the best assessments, the teachers' written feedback is comprehensive and clear. All students' work is marked regularly and is subsequently reassessed by a member of the internal verification panel. This panel meets frequently to discuss assessment methodology and review students' work. However, the internal verification records are not always fully completed and many records are not signed or dated.

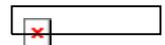
85. A very wide range of IT courses are offered at community venues. This is in addition to the ICT courses offered through a number of franchise partners. These arrangements successfully meet the needs of local people. The linkages with business through various college-based systems and projects are adequate. However, there is no formal employer advisory group to ensure that new courses have industrial currency.

86. Support arrangements for full-time students are good and comprehensive. Applicants for full-time courses receive effective assessment and guidance at the interview stage. The induction programme is satisfactory. Pastoral care is good. The standard of practical support and guidance on coursework is very high. The advice and guidance on careers information and progression to HE are good. Students with learning or physical difficulties are given effective support during lessons. The numeracy, literacy and language support for full-time students is extensive. Computer software is available and used to meet individuals' needs. Teachers work in close partnership with support staff. Teachers use a wide range of visual and practical activities to reinforce language skills. However, for many part-time evening students, initial diagnostic assessment and support are ineffective.

Leadership and management

87. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory, and the management of franchise provision is good. The careful monitoring of franchised targets, frequent unannounced visits and comprehensive reviews ensure that the franchise provision is of high quality. Within the college, internal communications are good and management and staff meetings are well managed and productive. The sharing of good practice within and across campuses is satisfactory. The programme of monitoring teachers' performance and conducting lesson observations is adequate. The training needs of teachers are regarded as a priority. A comprehensive programme for teacher training is in place. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds are well represented on the IT practitioner courses. Students with limited mobility have good access to the provision. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The self-assessment report provided a realistic assessment of the provision's quality. Insufficient actions are taken to improve attendance and punctuality.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high pass rate on NVQ level 2 in hairdressing

- much good teaching and learning

- very good specialist accommodation

- provision effectively meets community needs

- very good student support.

Weaknesses

- low retention rates on manicure certificate and NVQ level 3 beauty therapy

- poor attendance

- insufficient clients to meet training and assessment needs.

Scope of provision

88. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. Hairdressing qualifications include NVQ courses at levels 2 and 3 and apprenticeships. Beauty therapy courses are available at NVQ levels 2 and 3 and are mainly studied full time. Part-time courses include the certificate in cosmetic make-up, the diploma in body massage, and nail technology. Courses are offered in Asian bridal make-up and mendhi/henna skin decoration. Most students are adults, many of whom study full time. Over 300 full-time students are on hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. About 220 part-time students follow courses in hairdressing, beauty and holistic therapies. The apprenticeship programme is running for the first time in 2004/05 and has five apprentices. Nine schools collaborate with the college and currently 32 students aged 14 to 16 attend college programmes.

Achievement and standards

89. Pass rates are high on the full-time hairdressing NVQ level 2 and the beauty therapy level 3 courses. Retention rates are satisfactory. The retention rate on the NVQ level 1 hairdressing course is high and has increased over the last three years. However, retention rates have been low for the past three years on the NVQ level 3 beauty therapy and the manicure certificate courses. In 2003/04, the retention and pass rates on the body massage and reflexology courses have declined and were below the national averages. Student attendance is poor, at 66%.

90. Students on the level 1 NewCAD make good progress in their studies. In 2003/04, 65% progressed on to the hairdressing NVQ level 2 course. Most students with English as a second language and students with learning difficulties develop a high standard of practical skills. Many students produce good written work. They undertake effective research and understand the requirements of set tasks. For example, students on Asian bridal make-up courses use imaginative presentations and creative portfolio presentations for nail art. Students make good use of the independent study centre.

A sample of retention and pass rates in hairdressing and beauty therapy, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	1	No. of starts	55	76	79
		% retention	60	79	86
		% pass rate	70	90	72
NVQ hairdressing (1 year)	2	No. of starts	62	28	38
		% retention	60	36	74
		% pass rate	51	90	96
Manicure certificate	2	No. of starts	31	51	50
		% retention	23	57	66
		% pass rate	43	90	76
NVQ beauty therapy (1 year)	2	No. of starts	46	43	48
		% retention	76	72	79
		% pass rate	63	94	87
NVQ beauty therapy (2 years)	3	No. of starts	25	38	28
		% retention	64	42	61
		% pass rate	56	100	94

Body massage diploma	3	No. of starts	41	52	24
		% retention	68	83	75
		% pass rate	89	93	67

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

Quality of education and training

91. Much of the teaching and learning is good. In most lessons, students are well motivated. A wide range of teaching and learning strategies are used to involve students and develop their knowledge. In group work, the more able students work alongside less able students to help build confidence. Students are well behaved and work well, both individually and in groups. In one part-time manicure evening lesson, the teacher frequently asked questions to the group and individuals throughout the lesson. Students' responses indicated an excellent grasp of technical knowledge and the use of terminology. In the commercial salon, hairdressing level 3 students met the higher standards required when colouring clients' hair. They had a good knowledge of colour choices and their application. In the weaker lessons, students are not fully engaged. In some lessons, teachers fail to check on and evaluate students' learning at the end of the lesson.

92. The specialist accommodation is very good. The new, spacious and well-planned ground floor nail and beauty salon, at the East Ham campus, has a welcoming reception. The fourth floor suite of modern salons is of a high standard. The commercial hairdressing salon in the town centre is near to the East Ham campus is well used. However, the number of clients is insufficient to support effective training and assessment or to create a realistic working environment. Too many level 2 hairdressing students work on hair blocks. Teachers are highly qualified and most have current industry links. The staff development policy is effective and staff take part in a wide range of in-house training. Staff undertaking external training share good practice well with peers.

93. Assessments for full-time and part-time students are planned effectively and students understand the documentation and process. Students' written assignments are returned promptly with encouraging and clear feedback. Internal verification is satisfactory. The college has recently employed two internal verifiers to implement changes and establish greater standardisation. The lack of clients restricts students' opportunities for learning and the opportunities for assessment.

94. The wide range of provision meets community needs effectively. The NewCAD hairdressing programme is well established. It supports the development of students with English as a second language and students who previously have not achieved qualifications. Students aged 14 to 16 from local schools follow and enjoy a selection of NewCAD units. Minority ethnic needs are addressed through a range of courses that include, Asian bridal make-up, mendhi/henna skin decoration and African-Caribbean hairdressing. Modern apprentices and students with prior experience, follow a fast-track course at the town centre salon. Relations with local employers are good. Students have access to a wide range of enrichment activities; however, the take-up is low in this area.

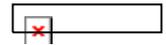
95. Student support is good. Full-time students have group and individual weekly tutorials with a learning advisor. Part-time students have a diary sheet for their appointments. Some lesson start times are delayed to permit childcare arrangements. Many students use the college nursery or if it is full they apply to a third party childcare scheme. A wide range of support is available for personal and study issues. Students' individual learning needs are identified prior to determining the level of course and its suitability. Initial assessment information is used to prepare position statements to support lesson planning. Students who miss lessons can access work on the college's virtual learning site.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership and management are good. Most of the teaching staff, the manager and head of area are new to the college. The placement of the new accommodation in the main foyer to in part

address low client numbers is an example of good strategic planning. The commercial salon in town has raised the profile of hairdressing opportunities for level 3 students and apprentices. Quality assurance arrangements are mostly good. The self-assessment report involved all staff and identified some key weaknesses. The actions taken to address concerns are effective. For example, changing the entry route to the NVQ level 2 hairdressing course, by using NewCAD programmes, has significantly improved the retention rate. The work undertaken to standardise assessments and internal verification is effective. However, the college's lesson observation grade profile was much higher than that judged by inspectors. Students who complete the quality assurance questionnaires do not receive feedback on their comments.

Health and social care



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good retention and pass rates on the certificate in pre-school practice

- effective initial assessment

- innovative curriculum development

- good individual student support.

Weaknesses

- much teaching lacks stimulation

- poor student punctuality and attendance

- inadequate development of key skills in vocational teaching.

Scope of provision

97. The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in health, social care and early years care. Courses range from entry level, to level 3. Progression routes are good. The provision

includes a large number of NewCAD programmes. In addition, courses offered include: the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education (CACHE) diploma and certificate; a part-time NVQ in early years care; and education and the certificate in pre-school practice. Care courses span entry level through to the national certificate in care at level 3. At the time of the inspection, about 80 students aged 16 to 18 and 182 adult students were following early years courses. In health and social care, there were 515 students aged 16 to 18 and 4,932 and adults. Most of the 225 students following counselling courses were adults.

Achievement and standards

98. Retention and pass rates are generally satisfactory. The retention and pass rates on the certificate in pre-school practice are well above the national averages. Pass rates have been high for three years. The retention and pass rates on the diploma in childcare and education are also high and the retention rate is well above the national average. Retention and pass rates on the short course NewCAD programmes are high. The retention rate on the pre-school practice diploma was below the national average for the last three years. The pass rates on the access to health studies course have declined over the last three years to below the national average.

99. Students make good progress towards reaching their goals. This includes their studies and progress towards employment or HE. Written work is well organised and note-taking is clear and accurate. Students contribute to discussions in a knowledgeable manner. During group work, most students concentrate on the set task, but also give good support to their peers. Students are confident when implementing group suggestions. Students' punctuality and attendance are poor. At the time of inspection, attendance at 60% was low.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health and social care, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Certificate in pre-school practice	2	No. of starts	60	50	28
		% retention	65	64	93
		% pass rate	90	91	92
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	19	41	14
		% retention	100	39	79
		% pass rate	89	94	91
Diploma pre-school practice (day and evening)	3	No. of starts	61	53	48
		% retention	70	81	80
		% pass rate	100	88	*
Diploma in counselling	3	No. of starts	61	24	**
		% retention	87	4	**
		% pass rate	11	0	**
Access to health studies	3	No. of starts	237	285	117
		% retention	83	85	90
		% pass rate	89	66	60

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

* data unreliable

**fewer than 15 students enrolled

Quality of education and training

100. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers produce satisfactory lesson plans and schemes of work. Students make good progress and are keen to achieve. Teachers provide good individual support for students both in lessons and as part of the tutorial system. In one good lesson, students took part in a good range of creative activities. At the end, the students gained a much better understanding of how to plan such activities for young children. However, much teaching does not stimulate students. Generally, lessons do not contain a range of approaches that meet the needs of very able or of the weaker students. Teachers miss opportunities to enliven lessons with relevant feedback from practical placements. Few links are made with key skills during vocational lessons. Teachers do not emphasise the importance of key skills or provide vocationally related practical activities to enable students to develop numeracy and literacy.

101. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Students are supported by a wide range of facilities including access to the college intranet. The range and opportunities for full-time students' placements are good. A few classrooms are cramped making practical work and discussion ineffective. Commercially produced handouts are not used imaginatively and they are not amended during lessons to make them relevant to the group of students. Teachers are vocationally experienced and most have teaching qualifications. Most of those without teaching qualifications are working towards them. Counselling teachers are professionally qualified and are in practice as counsellors.

102. Initial assessment is good and students are placed on appropriate courses. The results of the assessment are returned promptly to students and to relevant staff. Students know their developmental targets and work well with tutors on individual learning plans. Most students' portfolios contain evaluative comments by teachers which provide helpful suggestions for improvement. However, in a few cases, written feedback lacks explanations to correct students' misleading statements. Effective systems track and monitor individual students' progress. They can identify students who are not achieving their targets and those that require additional support. Formative assessments and comprehensive student reviews take place every seven weeks.

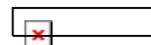
103. The approach to curriculum design is innovative. The NewCAD courses provide open access and good progression routes for students who may not otherwise enter FE. For example, one student progressed through the different levels and gained access to university and eventually into employment. Students attend many college-based enrichment activities such as dance, drama and music. These activities are applied to the vocational setting. Students gain confidence and relevant experience. It helps their creativity when organising activities for young children. Students on the counselling courses attend a useful away day to enable them to reflect on their work.

104. Support for individual students is good. Students have access to a wide range of support. Staff set short-term targets and students are keen to achieve them. Student learning advisers help students in group tutorials that have a vocational focus and in one-to-one tutorials. Counselling students develop effective peer group support. The nursery gives practical support for students with children and provides placements for childcare students. A student with a hearing impairment working on placement in the nursery was provided with a support worker. The worker also trained the nursery staff in hearing awareness. During the student review weeks, students' progress and additional support needs are monitored and action initiated if required.

Leadership and management

105. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course team roles are clear. Staff are well supported when allocated areas for development and improvement. Regular team meetings aid communication. Teachers are encouraged to attend recognised teacher training courses and to obtain assessor qualifications. Appraisals are carried out on a regular basis. Managers visit classrooms to monitor students' progress and teaching. A wide range of effective procedures and policies is in place to support staff and provide a clear operational framework. The college self-assessment report overstates the strengths of teaching, but otherwise it gives a realistic assessment of the provision.

Art, design and multimedia



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high retention rates on most advanced level courses

- high pass rates on foundation diploma and national diploma in design

- much good teaching

- excellent specialist accommodation and equipment

- good progression opportunities which meet community needs

- comprehensive support for students.

Weaknesses

- low retention and pass rates on national diploma in music technology

- poor attendance in a minority of lessons.

Scope of provision

106. The college offers full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to level 4 in art and design, media and music technology. At the time of inspection, there were 180 full-time and 499 part-time students. Some 269 students were aged 16 to 18 and 410 were adults. Most full-time students followed level 3 courses and 170 part time followed level 1 programmes. In addition, the college offers vocational units in art, design, multimedia, photography and video, fashion and music technology as part of the NewCAD provision. These may be studied as individual units or to create flexible combinations.

107. The college is a CoVE for textile manufacturing and design. The offer includes NewCAD units in pattern cutting, garment construction and tailoring at levels 1 to 3, and a national diploma and foundation degree in fashion.

Achievement and standards

108. Retention rates are good on most long courses and on NewCAD units. In 2003/04, most areas improved, except on the music technology national diploma, where the retention rate fell to 10 percentage points below the national average. Pass rates were high on NewCAD units, ranging from 88% to 100%. On level 3 art and design courses, they were also good, but in music technology the pass rates were slightly below the national average.

109. In most subjects, students' work is of a standard appropriate to the level of the course. Students' progress and standards of work are good on NewCAD art and design, and fashion programmes. Level 1 art and design students produce good repeat pattern work, by using cut-out shapes and appropriate printing techniques.

A sample of retention and pass rates in art, design and multimedia, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Art and design foundation studies	3	No. of starts	43	28	15
		% retention	65	93	100
		% pass rate	82	96	100
National diploma in design	3	No. of starts	69	50	21
		% retention	78	50	76
		% pass rate	37	96	94
National diploma in music technology	3	No. of starts	57	40	30
		% retention	30	48	40
		% pass rate	71	89	75
National certificate in music technology	3	No. of starts	35	33	17
		% retention	74	58	71
		% pass rate	62	32	67

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

Quality of education and training

110. Much of the teaching in art and design and music technology is good or better. In the better lessons, students are actively and enthusiastically engaged with their work. Lessons are well planned and well structured. Teachers are good at devising activities that maintain students' interest and concentration during studio sessions and other activities that extend over a full day. Demonstrations by teachers are effective. They ensure that students are clear about what they are required to do. In a level 2 NewCAD art and design lesson, students reviewed their progress as part of a group critique. Students of different abilities were able to analyse their work and evaluate the extent to which it met the objectives set. Timetabled resource-based learning sessions enable students to complete work, practice and extend their skills. Weaker lessons are characterised by limited planning and lack of structured activities. Students are not clear about their tasks or what they are learning. During the inspection, attendance rates were low.

111. Teachers are well qualified in their specialist subjects, but only a quarter have a full teaching qualification. Most of the other teachers are partly teacher trained or currently in training. Teacher

training is offered to all eligible staff. Specialist accommodation in art and design is excellent and good in music technology. In art, design and fashion, there are spacious and well-equipped studios and workshops. Fashion has industry standard equipment, including a new computer-aided design system that supports CoVE related activities. Students have good access to dedicated specialist computer suites for art and design, multimedia and music technology. Resource-based learning materials designed to consolidate and extend learning, are used well by students. The materials are well designed and support course assignments. The library has a good range of books and journals including resources relevant to the CoVE.

112. Initial assessment for full-time students is effective. The process clearly identifies students' key skills levels and additional learning support needs. Results are circulated to the relevant course team and are used to inform lesson planning. Student assessment takes place every seventh week and for NewCAD courses, this leads to unit accreditation. Generally, students' work is accurately and thoroughly marked. Students receive good verbal feedback on their progress. Written feedback is encouraging and clearly identifies the strengths and weakness in the students' work. However, it is not always sufficiently detailed to inform them about what they need to do to improve their work. External verifier reports are positive and confirm that internal verification meets awarding body requirements.

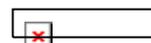
113. There is a good range of specialist and general art and design courses at levels 1 to level 3. Internal progression routes are good. Students can progress from general to specialist courses, or to higher levels of specialist units. The NewCAD framework provides a flexible approach which is valued by adult students. Many are not able to commit to long programmes. As an example, some fashion students created a unique programme by combining pattern cutting, garment construction and tailoring at various levels. For students to achieve a NewCAD diploma at levels 1 and 2, they must also reach the appropriate key skills level. Students regularly participate in educational visits and live community projects. They present their work in exhibitions, fashion shows and at performances. National diploma and foundation studies students extend their skills by taking additional NewCAD units in photography, ceramics and digital imaging.

114. Support for students is good, with strong links between pastoral and academic support. Students with identified learning support needs are well supported. For example, in one level 2 lesson a support worker signed for two students with hearing impairments and another supported a student with severe learning difficulties. All students participated fully in the lesson. The full-time student tutorial programme is good. The student learning advisor, who works closely with subject specialist teachers, sets individual targets for students and monitors their progress. Tutorial schemes of work are closely linked to students' main programmes. Part-time students do not undertake an initial assessment or receive tutorial support.

Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management are good. Managers have a clear sense of direction and a commitment to improving quality. Staff teams meet regularly and are generally well informed and supported by their managers. Communications are good and line management responsibilities clear. The college's quality assurance system is well implemented. Course management files are comprehensive. Management information is regularly used to support decision making and improvement. However, there are some inconsistencies in the way staff use and interpret the data. The self-assessment report was well written and mostly accurate. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Staff are appraised annually. Opportunities for staff development are good. Recent activities have focused on teaching and learning and quality improvement. The management of the CoVE is good. There are a good range of partnerships that are used effectively to strengthen the provision.

Literacy and numeracy



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good student progression and achievement

- innovative curriculum design for foundation programmes

- good development of independent learning skills

- good initial assessment and induction.

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention paid to individual learning needs

- insufficient focus on teaching vocational literacy and numeracy skills

- too little use of ILT.

Scope of provision

116. The college offers full-time NewCAD foundation programmes in all vocational areas. Some 80% of these students follow literacy and numeracy courses at level 1, for at least six hours a week. Students on other college programmes can receive individual, small-group and in-class literacy and numeracy support. This includes the Prince's Trust programme for young people. The college also offers part-time day and evening literacy and numeracy courses from entry level 1 to level 1. This provision is offered at the main college campuses, in four community venues and through franchised arrangements at two local schools. Students follow the NewCAD programme which is designed to accredit unit achievement. The accumulation of units can lead to an OCN accredited qualification at award, certificate or diploma levels. At the time of inspection, a total of 2,301 students were following the NewCAD programmes, of which 391 were continuing students. These included: 682 adult students on vocational programmes; 173 students on distinct literacy and numeracy courses; 154 students on franchised provision; and 625 students receiving additional learning support.

Achievement and standards

117. Retention rates on literacy and numeracy courses are improving and are above national averages. Achievement is good across the provision. For example, in 2003/04, a total of 537

students on vocational programmes achieved NewCAD accreditation. The pass rate on literacy entry level short courses was high, at 95%, well above the national average. The pass rate on numeracy level 1 short courses was also high, at 94%. Progression rates are good. In 2003/04, of the students who followed part-time courses, 38% progressed to a higher entry level or level 1 programme, and 40% progressed from level 1 to other programmes. Over 70% of young people on the foundation programme progressed to other courses.

118. Students develop good independent learning skills. On full-time programmes, students have weekly independent study sessions, where they are encouraged to explore and use relevant computer software. Teachers of communication and numeracy use challenging project work and language development activities to help students to develop research skills. In literacy and numeracy lessons, students' self-confidence and self-esteem improves steadily. For example, many learn how to help their children or grandchildren with schoolwork. Overall, students make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

Quality of education and training

119. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is a substantial component of most NewCAD foundation programmes. Teaching is often most effective where the students understand the relevance of literacy and numeracy tasks in relation to their vocational learning. For example, ICT teachers and literacy and numeracy teachers have successfully developed an integrated model of delivery. Assignments are designed for a range of abilities and specific software is used to reinforce learning in a vocational context. Staff meet frequently to discuss the progress of individual students in relation to their literacy and numeracy needs. ICT teachers support the development of these skills by including, for example, extra reading on websites.

120. Literacy and numeracy support, offered through the supported independent study facility, is effective. Students speak very positively of this provision. For example, business administration students use the facility effectively to develop communication and presentation skills relevant to potential employers. However, some teaching on the full-time foundation programmes does not relate sufficiently to students' vocational learning. Schemes of work and lesson plans are too standardised. Often, there is no reference to, or contextualisation of, the vocational course a group of students are following. There is an over-reliance on generic worksheets. For example, there are no opportunities for motor vehicle students to develop descriptive writing skills that relate to the car industry.

121. On literacy and numeracy discrete courses, schemes of work and lesson plans are standardised and appropriately mapped to the core curricula. Literacy lessons are well focused on the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. In the best teaching, teachers effectively build on students' experience and expertise. However, in many lessons, teachers pay insufficient attention to the learning needs of individual students. Students are not always fully aware of their specific targets. Too often, activities and materials do not take into account students' preferred learning styles. Tasks are not always sufficiently challenging for more able students.

122. Resources are generally satisfactory. Most staff have teaching qualifications. Interpreters provide good support for students with hearing impairment. The equipment and materials available on all sites is good. Teaching rooms are generally clean, bright and well furnished. However, there is very little display of students' work in classrooms that celebrates achievement. Teachers do not make sufficient use of ILT. Although teaching rooms are well resourced with computers and appropriate software, limited use is made of these to broaden learning activities. Where ILT is used, its use is not planned as part of the learning process.

123. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are satisfactory. Six weekly assignments are effectively used to monitor student progress. The process is rigorous and benefits the students. However, for most of the provision ongoing assessment of students' progress is less robust. Individual learning plans do not identify specific literacy and numeracy targets for students. Students' progress is inadequately recorded. The recording of ongoing progress is too infrequent and insufficiently evaluative. Students' attendance and progress are monitored well.

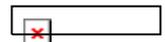
124. The college's NewCAD foundation framework is innovative and inclusive. Since its introduction; participation, retention and pass rates have improved. NewCAD programmes can be tailored to provide an effective mixture of literacy and numeracy teaching to support vocational learning. The core curriculum of the foundation programme is specifically designed to achieve this outcome. NewCAD's flexibility offers part-time and full-time students the opportunity to gain accreditation every six weeks. However, although foundation courses enable progression to higher-level courses at the college, they are not recognised nationally.

125. Initial assessment and induction are good. Students on full-time and substantive part-time programmes are uniformly assessed. The three-hour initial and diagnostic assessments are followed by a one-to-one interview with a teacher. This process is effective in identifying learning support needs. The results are shared with vocational staff. Induction is comprehensive and covers all aspects of the college's activities. Students are provided with a detailed student handbook. Induction is reinforced effectively by teachers during lessons and in tutorials. Most students aged 16 to 18 are able to recall aspects of equality and diversity, and are knowledgeable on college procedures.

Leadership and management

126. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Clear direction is provided by a college director and curriculum managers. The strategies for improving recruitment, retention and pass rates are effective. Frequent and well-focused meetings support the sharing of good practice. Actions points arising from the meetings are monitored effectively. Comprehensive in-house training is effective in updating teachers' skills in areas such as lesson planning and assessment techniques. The college has made a significant investment in staff development. However, there are still too few teachers with the appropriate qualification for the levels they teach. Internal verification procedures are thorough. Staff are observed regularly as part of the college's quality assurance arrangements. However, some observers do not have sufficient specialist knowledge to make informed judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. The self-assessment report identified all the strengths and some of the weaknesses found at inspection, but understated some of the weaknesses.

English for speakers of other languages



Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

Strengths

- good student achievement on NewCAD programme

- many students develop good independent learning skills

- good management of lesson planning and final student assessment

- good availability of ESOL in the community.

Weaknesses

- inadequate teaching strategies to meet individual learning needs

- insufficient monitoring of students' progress

- ineffective quality monitoring.

Scope of provision

127. The college offers ESOL courses during weekdays, evenings and on Saturdays. The provision ranges from pre-entry to level 1. Programmes take place at the two main college campuses, seven local centres and two franchised providers. In addition, each year, there is a summer school. At the time of inspection, there were 1,749 students following a programme. Of these, 167 were studying at pre-entry level, 425 at entry level 1, 524 at entry level 2, 2,408 at entry level 3 and 225 at level 1. The provision is timetabled to enable students with varying commitments to attend when it is convenient to them. The offer is modular and students accumulate credits of achievement that contribute towards an OCN qualification at award, certificate or diploma levels. The provision is a part of the NewCAD framework. Students can leave and join the programme as dictated by their circumstances. The programme provides opportunities for progression on to the full-time foundation programme.

Achievement and standards

128. Retention rates are improving. The percentage of all students who stay on their agreed programme and achieve an award, certificate or diploma, has increased from 60% to 70% over the last two years. Most students successfully achieve some form of accredited outcome. Approximately one third choose to leave the programme with a single credit with two-thirds following more modules. Many make significant progress and achieve the award and certificate qualification. The number of students that achieve the full diploma is low. In 2003/04, 50% of students progressed from one level to another. Students are given the opportunity to enter the national literacy test at level 1 and/or a nationally recognised listening and speaking examination. Although the number of students taking these additional qualifications is small, in 2003/04, the retention and pass rates were excellent.

129. Students make good progress in developing their listening and speaking skills. In most lessons, the standard of students work is satisfactory. Students are actively encouraged to develop their independent learning skills. Homework is set regularly. Students receive a comprehensive introduction in the use of the college's well-resourced learning centres and libraries. Tutorials are effective in improving language learning skills. For example, students are encouraged to speak more English with their children and to listen to the radio. Student attendance at lessons is satisfactory. The average group size is above the national average. Punctuality is rigorously monitored by teachers. If late, students routinely complete a standard form and the reasons for the lateness are discussed at tutorials.

Quality of education and training

130. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there is a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in community venues. Schemes of work and lesson plans are appropriately cross referenced to the ESOL core curriculum. The most successful lessons are well planned. Teachers use a variety of activities effectively to build on good commercially produced ESOL materials. In one

lesson, the issue of obesity was tackled through a lively discussion. The teacher effectively developed and extended students oral communication skills. In the best lessons, students learn English by undertaking a range of activities. These help them acquire the skills and knowledge they need for everyday life and work. The better teachers are skilled in developing oral communication to a high standard. They are effective at checking the accuracy and use of language structures.

131. In less satisfactory lessons, teachers use inappropriate teaching strategies to meet individual learning needs. The lessons are overly dominated by the teacher, with little opportunity for the students to practise the speaking of English. There is an over-reliance on worksheets and a limited range of activities to enrich the learning experience. Teachers do not take sufficient account of students' varied learning styles, abilities and prior attainments. The majority of weaker students are well supported by teachers and their peers. However, the more able students are not always sufficiently challenged and stimulated. In many lessons, all students complete the same worksheet irrespective of their language ability or capability.

132. Resources are satisfactory. The majority of ESOL staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. However, 37% of the teachers working in the community do not hold a teaching qualification. The accommodation used for the teaching of ESOL is generally of a good standard. Students' work or exhibits that celebrate achievement are rarely displayed on classroom walls. Most classrooms are well equipped, but the resources are not always used to best effect. At the main college sites, teachers do not make sufficient use of the very accessible language support software.

133. At the start of each programme, students are initially assessed; complete a learning styles questionnaire and take part in a well-organised induction programme. However, the results from these activities are not always used to plan lessons effectively or to meet individual learning needs. The assessment of students' progress at the end of each six week period is good. It is systematic with students required to complete accredited assignments. However, the monitoring of students' progress during the six weeks prior to the end of assessment is inadequate. Most students' individual learning plans are too general. Teachers do not set specific language targets. Most students can explain what they can do and what they need to do in general terms, but are unclear about specific language learning targets. Homework is set and marked regularly. However, written feedback is not always sufficiently detailed enough to help students improve their language skills.

134. The innovative design of the NewCAD foundation framework was in most part a response to Newham students' range of needs. It has helped motivate students and raise retention and pass rates. The range of localities used for ESOL lessons is extensive and is successfully widening participation. Students appreciate the closeness of many community venues to their homes and are able to fit learning around their daily commitments. However, there is no intensive provision for students who want to develop language more quickly.

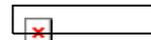
135. Guidance and support for students are good. Students are well supported by the teachers and personal tutors. Course information is available in a variety of community languages. Students have access to effective one-to-one support in the learning centres and a range of support services, for example, counselling and referral to external agencies. The college provides a substantial number of crèche places for the children of ESOL students. ESOL student representatives are elected to sit on the college student council. Training is provided to ensure that elected students can take full part in this role. A planned programme of visits, locally and nationally, is enjoyed by many ESOL students.

Leadership and management

136. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers provide a clear direction and set standards for maintaining the quality of the provision. Franchise provision is particularly well managed and monitored. There is good management of lesson planning and final assessments. Standardised documentation is consistently used by teachers and minimum acceptable standards of delivery are carefully monitored. There is a good range of in-house training that includes lesson planning and preferred learning styles. Teachers who are judged as weak receive good support from a trained coach. Meetings are held regularly, but do not focus sufficiently on sharing good practice. The attendance of part-time teachers at meetings is poor. Targets for retention and pass rates are closely monitored by managers. Internal verification is thorough and well managed. Some aspects of

quality monitoring are ineffective. The college's lesson observation grade profile was much higher than that awarded by inspectors. There is a very wide variation in the standard of teaching. College teaching observations do not sufficiently focus on learning. The self-assessment report was mostly accurate, but failed to identify some significant weaknesses.

Foundation programmes



Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates

- much good teaching

- highly effective learning support

- very effective advice and guidance.

Weaknesses

- inadequate setting of short-term targets.

Scope of provision

137. Courses in this area of learning are specifically designed for students with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Programmes are offered at pre-entry level, entry levels 1 to 3, and provide clear progression routes. The NewCAD young adults programmes offers a common core with opportunities for individuals to choose vocational and subject modules. On the 'Team Enterprise' course, students work as a team, setting up a business to produce art work for a local community project. The 'Into Work' course has been designed to provide students with the skills that will aid their transition from college. There is also a NewCAD adult programme aimed at adults with a range of disabilities.

Achievement and standards

138. Retention and pass rates are high. On accredited courses, the retention rate increased to 95% in 2002/03, well above the national average of 74%. The pass rate has remained at 100% well above the national average of 58.2%. High retention and pass rates contribute to progression. Over 70% of students progress on to other courses within the college. The NewCAD modular approach

has improved progression. Students value the increased flexibility to choose modules that meet their needs. Many students on the 'Into Work' course are successful and leave the college to move on to a partner organisation. They provide further training, work experience and, when the students are ready to work, paid or voluntary work.

139. Students gain confidence and make good progress. Many acquire good independence skills needed for personal development. Students are well motivated and enthusiastic. They are encouraged to progress at a pace that meets their needs. However, inadequate short-term target setting affects the rate of progress of some individuals. Other students are not challenged sufficiently. Some students on the 'Into Work' programme have repeated NewCAD units they have already achieved.

Quality of education and training

140. There is much good teaching, but none is outstanding. Appropriate teaching styles are used in most lessons. The best lessons are well prepared and structured using stimulating learning activities. In most lessons, tasks are broken into small sequential stages allowing achievement at each stage. Paper-based learning materials are designed to address individual needs. Students gain confidence and make good progress to acquire the skills they need for their future development. In a number of lessons, the teaching is uninspiring. They lack creativity and the tasks do not sufficiently stimulate the students.

141. Learning support is highly effective and available for all students. The provision of specialist support where it is needed is good. Support is made available immediately after a student has completed their initial assessment. The working partnership between most learning support workers and relevant teachers is highly effective. Staff have a good awareness of students' individual needs. Most staff have specialist qualifications and are involved in a continuing training and development programme. For example, most staff have recently received training in Makaton. Skilled communicators are readily available for hearing impaired students. In one lesson, a communicator observed, facilitated and took part in a group role play. The paper-based learning materials that are developed by teachers are good. A lift enables students with mobility problems to access all floors of the college. A minority of the rooms used, especially at the Stratford campus, are too small for the numbers of students using them.

142. Students receive good advice and guidance. The college's course leaflets using symbols and photographs are very effective. The format of the course leaflets enables students to clearly understand what they will do whilst at the college. This information is made available to parents and carers through open evenings and other events. Every year, there is an adult course conference. The college induction programme is good and was recently redesigned to better meet the learning needs of individual students. Learners receive good ongoing guidance and advice throughout their time at college.

143. There is inadequate setting and monitoring of short-term targets for the majority of the students. There is insufficient evidence of lesson evaluation, assessment and review of individual student progress towards their learning goals. The progress individual students make cannot be accurately measured and some are not challenged sufficiently. All students have individual learning plans and take part in regular six weekly reviews. However, these only monitor medium and long-term target achievement. The students' progress towards achieving their agreed targets is not recorded rigorously.

144. The college is responsive to the needs of the local community and students own aspirations. For example, the college organised a conference for the local community to discuss plans for new adult learner courses. Contacts with outside agencies are strong and communication is good. Many students come from residential homes, care homes, social services and schools. The college is very responsive and tries to meet individual needs. One student for instance wanted to travel to college independently. The college made the necessary arrangements, monitored the process and enabled the student to achieve their goal. This target was recorded in the student's individual learning plan. It is planned that a support worker will go with another student, whilst they are on work experience.

Leadership and management

145. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum area is well led and managers provide their teams with a clear direction. Curriculum development is good. New courses are carefully designed to enable students to progress to other relevant courses. Staff have very good working relationships and communication is good. Meetings are carefully timetabled to enable part-time staff to attend. The availability of high-quality training is good. The self-assessment report was mostly accurate and inspectors agreed with the college's overall assessment. The arrangements to assure the quality of the provision are mostly effective. The promotion of equality of opportunities is good.

Part D: College data

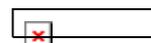
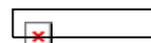


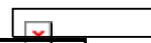
Table 1: Enrolments by level of study and age 2003/04



Level	16-18 %	19+ %
1	58	74
2	29	17
3	10	7
4/5	0	0
Other	3	2
Total	100	100

Source: provided by the college in autumn 2004

Table 2: Enrolments by curriculum area and age



Curriculum area	16-18 No.	19+ No.	Total Enrolments (%)
Science and mathematics	665	746	4
Land-based provision	139	289	1
Construction	422	834	3
Engineering, technology and manufacture	251	437	2
Business administration, management and professional	738	2,532	9
Information and communications technology	1,516	3,239	13

Retailing, customer service and transportation	0	8	0
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	144	485	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	220	677	2
Health, social care and public services	1,002	5,929	19
Visual and performing arts and media	671	1,254	5
Humanities	323	177	1
English, languages and communication	177	808	3
Foundation programmes	3,128	10,521	36
Total	9,396	27,936	100

Source: provided by the college in 2004

Table 3: Retention and achievement

Level (Long Courses)	Retention and pass rate	Completion year					
		16-18			19+		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
1	Starters excluding transfers	443	309	375	2,805	2,832	1,137
	Retention rate %	72	78	70	77	80	74
	National average %	75	74	75	73	74	71
	Pass rate %	38	47	65	45	48	58
	National average %	64	65	73	68	68	76
2	Starters excluding transfers	1,091	1,321	904	1,657	2,140	1,059
	Retention rate %	68	57	70	69	59	67
	National average %	70	70	70	70	69	68
	Pass rate %	48	42	72	60	54	69
	National average %	67	68	73	65	69	73
3	Starters excluding transfers	2,107	1,273	1,087	2,052	2,506	1,818
	Retention rate %	56	70	68	65	70	66
	National average %	67	75	75	67	69	67
	Pass rate %	50	52	75	59	59	66
	National average %	70	73	76	65	69	73

4/5	Starters excluding transfers	*	*	*	69	92	25
	Retention rate %	*	*	*	54	79	76
	National average %	**	**	**	65	67	70
	Pass rate %	*	*	*	22	30	89
	National average %	**	**	**	69	74	79

Note: summary of retention and achievement for the last three years by age and level of course, compared against national averages for colleges of the same type (that is general FE/tertiary colleges or sixth form colleges).

Sources of information:

1. National averages: Benchmarking Data 2000 to 2002: Retention and Achievement Rates in Further Education Colleges in England, Learning and Skills Council, September 2004.

2. College rates for 2000/2001 to 2002/03: College ISR.

*fewer than 15 students enrolled

**data unavailable

Table 4: Quality of teaching observed during the inspection by level

Courses	Teaching judged to be:			No of sessions observed
	Good or better %	Satisfactory %	Less than satisfactory %	
Level 3 (advanced)	60	33	7	58
Level 2 (intermediate)	56	35	9	46
Level 1 (foundation)	71	25	4	28
Other sessions	56	36	8	73
Totals	60	33	7	205

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2005. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

