



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## RE-INSPECTION OF Highbury College

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### Outcome of Re-Inspection

- The overall provision in the curriculum area of engineering is now **satisfactory**.
- The overall provision in English for speakers of other languages is now **satisfactory**.
- The overall provision in literacy and numeracy is now **satisfactory**.

### Background

Highbury College was inspected in February 2003. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in engineering, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) and literacy and numeracy, which were found to be less than satisfactory.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning (WBL) areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or where leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory leadership and management, or less than satisfactory provision in solely WBL, inspectors from Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the less than satisfactory areas. As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that previously less than satisfactory areas of provision, or leadership and management, are now satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, but there is curriculum provision that is less than satisfactory, there will be no monitoring visits. All less than satisfactory provision will be re-inspected, normally during one week, within two years of the original inspection.

If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that the curriculum or WBL area or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grade

for the area that continues to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection within the cycle. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and the reasons why.

### **Date of the Re-Inspection**

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection of engineering, ESOL and literacy and numeracy took place during the week of 7-11 March 2005.

### **Engineering**

In the February 2003 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

#### **Strengths**

- good teaching resources
- good support for students
- good framework completion rates for advanced modern apprenticeships general engineering.

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor management of programmes
- poor achievement and slow progress on many programmes
- poor framework completion on motor vehicle courses
- very poor attendance on motor vehicle courses
- insufficient assessment in the workplace for motor vehicle NVQ students
- lack of provision at entry and foundation level in engineering.

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

Engineering is well managed and the management of motor vehicle is improving. Both areas have a clear and well understood management structure, and there are good communications with staff. Course team meetings are scheduled monthly and minuted with actions. Internal verification standardisation and programme quality review meetings are held termly.

Pass rates in 2003/04 in engineering were high and were significantly above national averages. The pass rate in City and Guilds 3992 motor vehicle repair and maintenance was below the national average. The pass rate for the NVQ level 2 in vehicle maintenance and repair shows good improvement. Students make good progress on their courses.

Framework achievements in motor vehicle work based learning are improving. For example, the current achievement rate for the foundation modern apprenticeship in motor vehicle is 36%. Three additional motor vehicle students are awaiting certification and achievement will increase to 57%.

Attendance on motor vehicle courses has significantly improved. An effective system to monitor and improve attendance is in place. Teachers monitor attendance and the departmental administrator advises parents of an absence or lateness on the day it occurs. If students are late on three occasions then an interview is arranged with the head of department.

Assessment of motor vehicle work-based learning students in the workplace has improved. A work based assessor who is only responsible for assessing motor vehicle students regularly visits them in the workplace. However, there are inconsistent assessment and review practices in work-based learning. For example, short term targets in reviews are in many cases not time bound.

Courses have now been extended to include level 1 programmes in engineering and motor vehicle. These enable students to undertake qualifications for which they are suited. These programmes are also delivered to students from local schools.

### **English For Speakers of other Languages**

In the February 2003 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

#### **Strengths**

- effective curriculum development in the community
- good pass rates on intermediate programmes
- good support for personal developments of students.

#### **Weaknesses**

- insufficiently demanding teaching in many lessons
- underdeveloped links between initial assessment and individual learning plans
- underdeveloped ESOL strategy and management.

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

Achievement rates for college certificates are very good. The average is 94% for 2003/04. Achievement is rigorously measured by successful completion of individual student targets and a minimum of 75% attendance. Modularisation since autumn 2003 has helped to improve pass rates. The college also plans to offer the Cambridge Skills for Life ESOL assessment. This will replace inappropriate EFL exams.

Attendance and retention have improved considerably as a result of effective strategies. During inspection the average attendance rate was 75%. Absences are promptly and effectively followed up. An increase in course hours has improved student commitment. Community links and off-site venues are now good.

There is now good teaching and learning in the majority of classes. Most lessons are well-paced with appropriate and varied activities that effectively meet learners' needs. There are some good examples of differentiated learning that challenge learners at their respective levels, although further development is still needed. Good support for personal development of students continues. Links between initial assessment and individual learning plans have improved, partly through effective use of individual student achievement files. However the standard of individual learning plans is inconsistent.

There is now good and effective management of discrete ESOL provision. ESOL has a clear and appropriate strategy as part of the college's Skills for Life strategy. An ESOL coordinator was appointed in June 2003 and the Skills for Life strategy is well coordinated by an essential skills manager. There are regular and productive meetings, strong links between ESOL and literacy and an excellent team spirit. The quality review process has also improved. The self-assessment report is accurate and managers are aware of improvements needed. Internal verification systems are effective. There is effective sharing of good practice and effective staff development.

### **Literacy and numeracy**

In the February 2003 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

#### **Strengths**

- good family literacy provision
- good basic skills support in vocational lessons

- effective community partnerships
- some good individual support in the learning centre.

### **Weaknesses**

- ineffective use of initial assessment to inform learning plans
- much ineffective teaching
- poor attendance in some basic skills classes
- little use of information technology (IT) to support students' basic skills development
- lack of clarity in the management of basic skills.

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

Retention is very good and pass rates are good on most courses. Attendance is now good in most lessons, rising from 68% in the inspection to 81% in lessons observed during re-inspection. However, attendance in communication skills lessons on the First Diploma in Business course is poor. The college is aware of this and has taken action, but this has yet to have any impact. Punctuality in most lessons is good.

Teaching and learning are now good in most lessons. In lessons observed, the proportion of good or better teaching was slightly above the national average for this area of learning. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been significantly reduced. Lesson planning is detailed and most lessons include a variety of stimulating teaching and learning activities. The results of initial and diagnostic assessment, including personal development needs, are now used effectively to inform planning of the majority of lessons. However, these results are not fully taken into account in planning a minority of lessons. Access to information and learning technology has improved, and good use is made of IT.

Leadership and management are now effective. Roles and responsibilities are clear. New posts and management structures have supported improvement. A coherent whole college strategy for literacy and numeracy has been developed. Management strategies have resulted in improvements in teaching and learning, attendance, and average class size since the previous inspection. The

college's self-assessment of the area is accurate. There is a lack of literacy and numeracy provision in the community and the workplace. There are no courses in local community venues and only seventeen students on workplace courses. The local education authority now runs Family Literacy courses, rather than the college.

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

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