

BRENT 16-19 AREA-WIDE INSPECTION

Ofsted Reference: 55/01/AW



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BRENT

16-19 AREA-WIDE INSPECTION

Summer 2000

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAIN FINDINGS

Access and participation

- The staying-on rate post-16 in Brent is well above the national average, with over 83 per cent of 16 year-olds continuing into full-time education in school sixth forms or at the College of North West London (CNWL).
- The proportion (at about seven per cent) of 16 and 17 year-olds progressing into employment or work-based training is below national and London averages. As there are only a small number of training providers in the borough, many trainees travel to providers in neighbouring boroughs, such as Harrow.
- All of the 14 secondary schools in the area (including one special school) have sixth forms. The majority of pupils remain in post-16 education without changing institutions to study General Certificate of Education Advanced level (GCE A-level) or General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) programmes.
- The CNWL does not provide a full-time GCE A-level programme for 16-19 students but makes a significant contribution to the staying-on rate by providing entry-level access courses, vocational education courses at all levels and support for disaffected students and those with special needs. It provides a GCE A-level programme at Islamia, a Muslim girls' school, through a partnership agreement.
- The North West London Training and Enterprise Council (NWLTEC), in partnership with the CNWL and training providers, has worked effectively to extend the range of training programmes for students from disadvantaged and/or minority ethnic backgrounds, and to widen participation for young people at risk of dropping out of education and training.

Achievement

- Completion rates in school sixth forms in the area are generally satisfactory, broadly in line with sixth forms elsewhere. Completion rates on college courses are generally average for colleges with similar intakes. The exceptions to this are National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1 and 2, where completion rates are below average, and two-year courses, where they are weak. Completion rates for 16-19 year-old students in the Islamia School partnership have been below average. The school has raised entry requirements for GCE A-level courses to be in line with those set by many sixth form colleges.
- The average GCE A-level points score achieved by students in the area is somewhat below the national average, although the results are average for outer London. At the CNWL, pass rates are average for similar general further education (FE) colleges. Several of the large sixth forms achieve good GCE A-level pass rates, but rates are low for some of the smaller sixth forms. Value added analysis indicates that GCE A-level performance is in line with expectations in most sixth forms.

- GNVQ results in the sixth forms are variable; they are above the national average in seven schools and below it in six. Pass rates at the CNWL are average for colleges with similar intakes for intermediate and advanced GNVQs, other long courses at level 1 and NVQs at level 3. They are below average for foundation GNVQs, NVQs levels 1 and 2 and other long courses at levels 2 and 3.
- Training provision is generally effective in helping young people to overcome barriers to social inclusion and acquire employment skills; achievement in NVQ engineering and construction is satisfactory and progression into employment is good. Retention rates for disaffected young people and disadvantaged groups are high.
- Progression rates to higher education (HE) are generally good or very good in the sixth forms, but they are poor in the CNWL for those following advanced programmes.

Curriculum and programmes available

- 16-19 education and training providers plan their curricula and programmes independently, according to their own priorities. However, there is little duplication between the college and the school sixth forms.
- The range of choice for GCE A-level subjects in individual sixth forms is generally satisfactory. However, modern foreign languages (MFL) attract only very small numbers, and some schools are withdrawing options of French and German because of the low demand.
- Provision of GNVQ courses across Brent is generally satisfactory. Schools limit their offers at intermediate and advanced levels to a few vocational areas in line with their expertise and student demand. The CNWL offers a wide range of GNVQ programmes at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels.
- The CNWL offers a wide range of other vocational courses at all levels.
- In the sixth forms and at the CNWL there is a good range of enrichment activities and suitable support for private study.
- There is a limited choice of training programmes for young people in Brent, but there is good specialist provision for the disadvantaged and minority ethnic groups, and good vocational training in engineering and construction.
- There is insufficient provision for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) on training programmes.

Teaching and learning

- The majority of the teaching in the sixth forms was good, and some was excellent, based on well-prepared sessions taught by appropriately qualified teachers, using a good variety of challenging teaching styles, well-matched to advanced level courses.
- In the CNWL the majority of lessons observed were satisfactory and almost half were good, but few were outstanding. In some of the weaker classes students were insufficiently

challenged and teachers did not adequately check that learning was taking place. Overall, teachers developed good working relationships with the students.

- Some college courses suffer from low attendance and poor punctuality.
- Vocational training is well organised and trainees benefit from learning in supportive off-the-job training environments.
- On-the-job vocational training is often unplanned and there is insufficient assessment at work.
- Basic skills training is carried out effectively by tutors using a variety of teaching methods well matched to learners' needs.

Support and guidance

- Overall, the quality of guidance and information made available to young people regarding post-16 education and training opportunities is good.
- The schools have generally well developed systems of careers education and guidance which are supported by effective partnerships with the careers company for Brent.
- The CNWL provides good, impartial pre-enrolment advice and information to 16-19 year-olds, but it is not invited into the schools to give information directly to school pupils; it participates in an annual careers fair, to which all pupils are invited, but some schools do not encourage their pupils to attend.
- There is generally effective and extensive tutorial and pastoral support for students in the sixth forms and at the CNWL, where there is also a wide range of welfare and additional support for those with special learning needs.
- Students in the sixth forms and on courses at the CNWL receive good careers guidance and preparation for HE.
- Trainees receive comprehensive and impartial advice and guidance before starting training, and are referred into programmes appropriate to their needs.

Collaboration

- With the exception of the joint sixth form of the John Kelly Boys' and Girls' Schools, and the provision of some GCE A-level courses at Islamia School by the CNWL, there is little collaborative post-16 provision in Brent.

Strategy and planning

- Since there has been no recent, overall, borough-wide plan, decisions on post-16 education have been taken by individual schools and the CNWL. Nevertheless, the CNWL has taken account of the strengths of the sixth forms, and developed wider access to vocational courses and foundation level provision to serve the needs of the borough. The college is also a long-standing member of a consortium of local colleges.

- The local education authority (LEA), the NWLTEC, school headteachers, the CNWL, the careers company and others have co-operated effectively in producing the Lifelong Learning Development Plan for North West London, which should be taken forward by the Learning and Skills Council for West London from April 2001. They are now working on action plans designed to improve and rationalise 16-19 provision.
- In the field of training, NWLTEC has fulfilled its aims and objectives for the development of quality training through clear strategies at provider level; it has made effective use of socio-economic data to widen access and participation, and to inform longer-term planning.

Cost effectiveness

- The college, schools and training providers lack national guidance on how to determine indicators that relate their effectiveness to their costs. It is particularly difficult in the FE sector to draw any conclusions about cost effectiveness.
- Overall, qualifications are delivered at reasonable cost in sixth forms, but with substantial differences between individual schools.

ISSUES FOR ATTENTION

This report highlights a number of important positive features in the provision of education and training for 16-19 year-olds in Brent. However, there are some significant disparities in performance and provision for different groups of young people, which need to be addressed. To this end, providers, working individually and collaboratively through the North West London Learning Partnership (NWLLP), should take action on the following issues.

- Measures should be taken to improve low completion and achievement rates on particular courses, and value added analysis should be used, where available, to focus on those courses and programmes in all sectors where young people are under-achieving.
- The number of youth training providers in Brent should be increased, and the choice of occupational areas for modern apprenticeships and national traineeships extended. The provision of ESOL within work-based training programmes should also be increased to meet the needs of this multi-cultural community.
- Improved systems are needed for linking training at work with college-based theory sessions, and for assessing trainees' occupational skills in the workplace.
- Schools should ensure that their Key Stage 4 students have direct access to advice and guidance from the college and training providers on the full range of post-16 education and training available to them.
- Sixth forms in the Harlesden area should actively consider local consortium arrangements to sustain a wide range of curriculum choice in a cost-effective way.

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INTRODUCTION

1. In its White Paper *Learning to Succeed - a New Framework for Post-16 Learning*, published in June 1999, the Government looked to the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) to lead area-wide inspections of 16-19 education and training, encompassing all providers. The Learning and Skills Act envisages that from 2001 these inspections will be carried out in partnership with the new Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI); prior to that the work is being carried out jointly with the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) Inspectorate and the Training Standards Council (TSC).

2. The programme commenced in autumn 1999 with an inspection of the area encompassing the LEAs of Hackney and Islington and continued into spring 2000 with the inspection of Lambeth, Tower Hamlets, Newcastle and Coventry. The inspection for Brent was conducted from May to July 2000. All the institutional providers were inspected along with major training providers in the area. The emphasis throughout was primarily on provision in the area as a whole, rather than on individual organisations. Visits were also made to special schools and the specialist modern language school. Within each sector inspectors worked to the relevant sections of their existing frameworks for inspection. Some evidence was drawn from other recent or current inspections of individual institutions or providers, to avoid duplicating inspection activity.

3. The inspection was in two stages. In the first stage, inspectors visited a sample of lessons and training sessions to assess the quality of what was provided and students' and trainees' responses to it. In the second stage, the focus was on visits to institutions and training providers to gather and interpret evidence on performance, curriculum and programmes, and cost/resource issues, and to meet staff and students or trainees. Inspectors also visited trainees and their employers in the workplace. In addition, certain themes, such as guidance, were addressed across the different sectors. Inspectors considered the contribution of the LEA, NWLTEC and the careers service to 16-19 provision in the area, and took account of available information on the local labour market and skills needs.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

4. Brent has a population of 243,025 and is one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse of all the local authorities in England. Minority ethnic communities account for 41.5 per cent of the local population and almost one in ten residents is Irish. The borough is ranked seventh highest of 366 local authorities in terms of deprivation but conditions vary across different parts of the borough. In January 2000, the unemployment level in Brent was 6.7 per cent, compared with only three per cent in neighbouring Harrow and the national unemployment figure of 4.3 per cent. Unemployment rates for minority ethnic groups are 28 per cent higher than for white people.

5. Approximately 70 per cent of all school pupils are from minority ethnic groups and in some Brent schools over 90 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The main home languages are Gujarati (44 per cent), Urdu (12 per cent) and Somali and Arabic (six per

cent). In January 1998 it was estimated that 3,000 refugee pupils were attending Brent schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.

6. The local economy has experienced consistent growth in recent years in high technology manufacturing, information technology (IT), leisure and tourism, and service industries. Although there are vacancies for jobs requiring no formal qualifications, there is greater demand for higher levels of skills than those possessed by the unskilled unemployed in the borough.

7. Levels of attainment have improved faster than the national rate in the primary and secondary sectors, and by 1999 the proportion of pupils attaining five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) A*-C grades, at 43 per cent, was approaching the national rate of 48 per cent.

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

8. The staying-on rate post-16 into full-time education is above national figures. In 1999 it was 83.2 per cent, compared with 69.8 per cent nationally. All of the 14 secondary schools (including one special school) have sixth forms and the majority of pupils remaining in post-16 education stay at the same school. In addition, some young people are attracted to the tertiary colleges in neighbouring Harrow, which have a wide range of vocational, GCE A-level and GCSE programmes, whilst other young people from Harrow prefer to join the Brent sixth forms at the age of 16+. In 1998, only seven per cent of Year 11 school-leavers progressed to employment or training. In 1999 the destinations of around eight per cent of leavers remained unknown.

9. The CNWL is a large general FE college, with three main sites in the borough, situated in Willesden, Wembley Park and Kilburn. Of the 12,501 students of all ages enrolled at the college at the time of the inspection, 16 per cent (2,050) were aged 16-19 years. The college does not have a sixth form centre. Students of this age group study alongside adult learners, and are in a minority on most courses. The college no longer provides full-time GCE A-level programmes and concentrates mainly on vocational and basic skills courses. However, the college has a partnership, mainly funded by the FEFC, with the Islamia School, a private, fee-paying Muslim girls' school, to provide free GCE A-level courses for Muslim young women who wish to continue their education in a single sex environment. The proportion of young women students at the CNWL is low at 35 per cent. This is largely accounted for by the high numbers of male students taking engineering and construction courses.

10. There are only three training providers offering youth programmes within Brent, including the engineering, construction and life skills training offered by the CNWL. The Building One-Stop Shop (BOSS) manages training initiatives for the construction industry, and Training & Assessment Services (TAS) is a well-established provider of adult programmes, which also undertakes some youth training for asylum seekers and refugees at

their Harlesden centre. Head to Head is the third training provider based in Stonebridge, offering IT based training to the unemployed and students, mainly from minority ethnic groups, with poor previous attainment at school. The youth training is funded by NWLTEC, which also covers the London borough of Harrow.

11. NWLTEC has actively sought to increase training provision for 16-19 year-olds, to meet identified needs, including life skills training, discrete provision for students for whom English as an additional language (EAL) and increased IT training at appropriate levels. Providers actively encourage participation from young people with poor prior achievements and who experience economic and social disadvantage.

12. Training opportunities for young people in Brent are adequate, although provision within the borough is limited. Many young people travel out of Brent to training providers in neighbouring boroughs.

13. All education and training providers in the area actively encourage participation by young people from all backgrounds. Most of the school sixth forms provide GCE A-levels and vocational courses, mainly attracting students with at least four A*-C grades at GCSE. The CNWL attracts mainly young people interested in pursuing vocational qualifications, and basic skills and life skills training, along with other training providers.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED AND PROGRESSION

College and schools

14. In 1999, there were 2,050 16-19 students in the CNWL and 2,500 students in the school sixth forms. The proportions of students completing their GCE A-level courses in the school sixth forms were broadly in line with sixth forms elsewhere. For the small numbers of 16-19 students completing GCE A-levels in the college, the overall completion rate was low at 49 per cent. This figure included students taking single subjects, often on evening courses now discontinued.

15. The average GCE A-level points scores in Brent for candidates taking two or more GCE A-level subjects was 15.2 in 1999, compared with a national figure of 18.2; results are average for outer London. Levels of achievement in GCE A-level vary considerably between institutions. In the CNWL, GCE A-level pass rates, which included students at Islamia School in 1999, were in line with the national average for general FE colleges with a similar intake.

16. Several of the large sixth forms achieve pass rates very close to the national average, whereas others, usually smaller sixth forms, achieve low results, well below the national average. Results on some courses are consistently high, although in the college and schools there are significant differences in achievement between GCE A-level subjects.

17. Taking value added analysis into account in the context of students' prior GCSE performances, the best sixth forms are obtaining results, at least in line with what should be expected. Results are satisfactory overall, except in the case of two schools.

18. In the CNWL, completion rates on GNVQ programmes are generally average, although they are below average on advanced GNVQ courses. In the sixth forms, completion rates have been mostly sound over the last few years, close to national benchmarks.

19. GNVQ pass rates in the CNWL are below the national average for foundation level. Pass rates were broadly in line with the average for colleges with a similar intake for advanced and intermediate GNVQs. Several pass rates on vocational courses, for NVQs at levels 1 and 2 and on longer courses at levels 2 and 3, were below average in 1999. There was low attendance and poor punctuality on some of these courses. There were good retention and achievement on entry level (basic skills) courses.

20. Most of the school sixth forms offer some advanced GNVQs and usually at least one intermediate GNVQ course. Completion rates are generally good, and results are above the national average in seven of the thirteen sixth forms; they are significantly below the national average in six of the sixth forms.

21. The very large majority of students taking GCSE subjects are at the CNWL, where pass rates at grades A*-C in 1999 were in line with the average for all general FE colleges. Students at the CNWL take individual GCSE subjects, rather than full GCSE programmes, in addition to another programme of study, such as GNVQ.

22. The CNWL provides courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and retention on all courses is good, including that by some students who were excluded or had poor attendance records at school. The standard of work produced and the results achieved by some students on these entry-level courses are good. Attendance was good in the lessons observed, and students were disciplined and positive about their courses and achievements. Progression from the entry-level programme is good, with many of the young people moving into employment.

23. In the school sixth forms, a large majority of students' work observed in the classroom was satisfactory or better, and in two-fifths of the classes it was good or very good. About 12 per cent of the work was excellent: it was characterised by students' questioning, analytical approach, a sophisticated tone to both written and oral work, and well-organised research skills. In mathematics, the sciences and business studies attainment in class was generally at least satisfactory, often good. In English, often a second language for many students, attainment in class was satisfactory, with students making good progress. In MFL, students from very mixed backgrounds lacked confidence and their oral skills were weak; they made satisfactory progress but had very little contact with the country whose language they were learning, and made insufficient use of the Internet for this purpose.

24. In the CNWL, students' written work in business studies and leisure and tourism was satisfactory; they made regular use of IT and used the Internet for research. However,

there was too much material downloaded without evidence that students understood or made good use of it. There were similar problems regarding the use of Internet sources in science and IT courses, and some written work was less than satisfactory. Although most students on these courses understood the concepts they were writing about, many had difficulty in expressing themselves clearly in writing. In art and design, students' work was satisfactory but there were few examples of outstanding work. Design students relied heavily on secondary sources for research and their work lacked depth in experimentation and individual development. In performing arts, the standard of practical work was very high.

25. Progression rates of students to HE are generally good or very good in the sixth forms. The majority of students from the CNWL on advanced level courses express initial interest in progression to HE, but only small numbers actually do so. Almost half the students offered HE places in 1999 did not take up the offer. The college has inadequate information on students' other destinations, especially from one-year courses and between levels of study in the college.

Training providers

26. Achievement rates for NVQs in Brent are satisfactory for engineering and construction. Trainees generally demonstrate good progress and substantial increases in personal effectiveness as a result of their training. Using the standard performance measure of the number of NVQ qualifications per 100 trainees who have left the programmes in the contract year, training providers in Brent perform satisfactorily.

27. In the CNWL, trainees' progress is effectively tracked, and they and their employers receive regular reports. In the modern apprenticeship programmes in 1998/9 there were 47 NVQs per 100 leavers, and in 1999/00 there were 43 NVQs achieved per 100 leavers. Progression into employment is good, with over 80 per cent of leavers achieving jobs in the last two years. Progress and achievement on other college-based training programmes was generally satisfactory, except in the case of the "Fast Forward" training programme which offers "tasters" in the construction industry for unemployed 16-18 year-olds. This initiative delivered in partnership between the college and BOSS, suffered from nearly 50 per cent non-completion and a significant number of trainees left without any significant achievement.

28. The other training providers, including TAS and Head to Head, offer a variety of learning opportunities on pre-vocational, life skills and basic skills certificated courses, where trainees make good progress. At TAS, for example, in 1999/2000 trainee achievement was 62 NVQs per 100 leavers, with good evidence of trainees' progress into FE or training, or into employment.

CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMMES AVAILABLE

29. The CNWL, school sixth forms and training providers generally plan their 16-19 curriculum and programmes of education and training independently. They have their own priorities and respond to the needs of their own students. The college's emphasis on

vocational qualifications means that the school sixth forms are the main providers for GCE A-levels. Thus there is little duplication between the school and FE sectors. Although the pattern of curriculum on offer is largely uncoordinated, almost all of the schools offer GCE A-levels and some advanced GNVQs, and most have an intermediate GNVQ course. This pattern was developed in former times through the influence of the LEA, and before that through the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) funding.

30. GCE A-level programmes are currently provided in all the sixth forms, except for Willesden High School where they were discontinued for the very small numbers of students in 1999 for financial and other reasons. The range of GCE A-level subjects in the sixth forms varies from 13 to 24 subjects, usually including mathematics, English, two or three sciences, humanities and business. More than 30 subjects in total are offered across the schools. Students interviewed did not identify any particular difficulties over option patterns or timetable arrangements; some subjects are repeated in different option blocks in some schools, so that students have a very good range of choices. MFL attract only very small numbers, often only three or four students, for example in German or French. At least one large sixth form is dropping the options of French and German next year owing to very small numbers. Several of the large, well-established sixth forms report a very heavy interest among Brent students for science and business-related subjects, as a means of gaining access to high status professional employment in business, science or medicine.

31. Provision of GNVQ courses across Brent is generally satisfactory, with the CNWL offering a good range of GNVQ programmes at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. The school sixth forms do not generally cater for foundation level students, but they provide a reasonable choice of GNVQ courses at advanced and intermediate levels, relative to their expertise and size. The exception is Willesden High School, which now offers only advanced business to very small numbers of students, and intermediate business to one fairly large group of students.

32. The CNWL also offers a wide range of other vocational courses at all levels, with a good choice of qualifications. These include a number of City and Guilds and NVQ qualifications in craft and practical subjects. There is also an entry-level programme for students with weak basic skills or learning difficulties. The college has designed a new programme for 2000-01 for students aged 16-22 with little or no previous academic or vocational achievement, and no definite vocational preference. This programme develops vocational and key skills.

33. The GCE A-level curriculum supported by the college partnership with the Islamia School offers only nine GCE A-level subjects. There is a strong emphasis on science, in response to demand from students and parents.

34. The CNWL closed its GCE A-level and GCSE full-time programmes from 1999 because students were not achieving well on those courses. One school sixth form offers a GCSE re-sit course to one group of students; elsewhere students wanting to improve their grades in GCSE English or mathematics take these subjects alongside an intermediate GNVQ course. Some gaps in the curriculum have been identified by the college, particularly the

need for better preparation for students moving on to advanced study in science, mathematics and computing, and the need to improve foundation level programmes. Plans are in hand to develop suitable courses.

35. Additional studies, intended to supplement students' main courses, are well developed in the CNWL and in most of the sixth forms outside and within timetabled courses. The college has very limited on-site sports facilities, but students have use of local leisure centres. There is generally a good range of enrichment activities including youth achievement awards, community service, work-based activities, sports leadership training and recreational courses. Many of the large sixth forms have impressive and well-developed systems for offering leadership and responsibility opportunities to sixth-form students, in contributing to the life of the school as a whole and providing role models and practical support for students in their upper and lower schools.

36. The range of programmes offered by training providers and the college covers a suitable range of NVQs at levels 1 to 3, but the choice of occupational areas offered in Brent is limited. The careers company, Lifetime Careers, has identified gaps in provision for computing, sound engineering, printing, and general special needs provision pre-NVQ. The college is the only provider in Brent to offer modern apprenticeships and national traineeships.

37. The demand for ESOL provision in the Brent area is substantial. Many young people do not speak English as their first language. However, few trainees with ESOL needs enter work-based training. TAS provides discrete ESOL provision as part of its life skills programme. The CNWL provides a variety of courses to address ESOL needs as part of its mainstream curriculum activities delivered on each of its three sites. It is not able to meet fully the demand for ESOL courses and has a waiting list for potential students. It has identified an increasing number of young people in need of this provision.

38. Difficulties have been experienced in attracting sufficiently qualified and suitable teaching staff to meet the demands from the community in this area. Initiatives have been established as part of the work of the lifelong learning partnership to recruit, through national advertising and provision of training, additional teaching staff for ESOL. The college, through the University for Industry (Ufi) is involved in piloting a number of learning materials produced specifically to support ESOL needs. The college has a full-time ESOL co-ordinator and undertakes a range of outreach activities with local community groups.

39. Each of the providers has tailored its programmes to meet the needs of particular disadvantaged groups. TAS works primarily with refugees and those with ESOL needs. Head to Head's trainees are recruited from the housing estate on which the organisation is based. Through BOSS, the college has undertaken to improve access for individuals who would otherwise experience difficulties in entering the construction trades. The programmes offered by all providers aim to improve both the social and vocational skills of trainees. The progress made by many trainees as a result of participating in programmes is not always recognised through the achievement of recognised qualifications or units towards NVQs.

QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

40. The majority of teaching seen in the school sixth forms was good or very good. Only very occasionally was it unsatisfactory, mainly because the subject material was not well matched to the needs of the students and explanations went over the students' heads; students consequently found it difficult to sustain their levels of attention. There was some excellent teaching seen in MFL, sciences, GNVQ business, mathematics and English.

41. The good teaching included such features as: well-prepared sessions taught by appropriately qualified teachers; a variety of teaching styles; a challenging approach, often based on stringent questioning; a readiness to allow students some freedom and the opportunity to develop an independent approach towards their learning; consistent assessment and reporting procedures, often based on well-focused, personal targets; and the regular setting and marking of written work. MFL teaching was well supported by the large number of native speakers and foreign language assistants employed.

42. The average class size in the lessons inspected in the sixth forms was about 11 students and ranged from two students in some MFL lessons, to 26 students on an advanced GNVQ course. In about a fifth of courses there were 20 or more students on roll. Attendance was generally good, at over 86 per cent.

43. There is an adequate supply of general teaching resources for post-16 work in the sixth forms. Information and communication technology (ICT) facilities are in heavy demand and all schools are devoting considerable amounts of money to updating and improving them. Teaching accommodation is generally satisfactory, although there are wide variations in quality between different schools. One school is expecting to move into new purpose-built accommodation, whereas in some other schools the quality of accommodation, including that for sixth form students, is poor. Most schools have sufficient room for private study, but one school, at which sixth form students are required to be permanently on-site, finds it difficult to provide sufficient, quiet working spaces for its students. Library and learning resources for sixth form students are good in several of the large sixth forms, but are poor in a few other centres.

44. The great majority of school sixth form students interviewed, both in and out of lessons, were highly motivated and ambitious; they were appreciative of the good relationships they had with their teachers and felt well supported in their learning.

45. In the CNWL, the teaching was generally satisfactory and almost half of the lessons seen were good. However, there was little outstanding teaching, and a small proportion was unsatisfactory, where students were insufficiently challenged and teachers did not adequately check that learning was taking place.

46. The college teaching was generally planned effectively, with lesson aims and objectives set out and explained by the teachers. In business and in leisure and tourism, the documentation was standardised across the courses. In the best lessons in the college, students were engaged and participated in thought-provoking activities, which took account

of their differing levels of ability and stimulated learning. However, in many classes in science, mathematics and computing there were insufficient checks on students' learning, and in some of the larger classes, of over twenty students, teachers did not manage the learning in a way that gave adequate attention to all students' needs. Punctuality and attendance were poor on some college courses.

47. College assessment practices and procedures were well defined and satisfied the requirements of the awarding bodies. There were regular written tests and homework, and coursework completed by the students was closely monitored. Students received written commentaries on their work but the level of detail provided by the teachers varied. In the best cases teachers gave students guidance on how to improve the structure, content and level of work, and action plans were monitored. The correction of grammar and spelling was not always attended to.

48. The qualifications, knowledge and experience of the teachers in the sixth forms and in the CNWL are appropriate for the courses being taught. There is generally satisfactory provision of staff development opportunities. In the college there is a teacher placement scheme to bring teachers' commercial experience up-to-date, and in the schools and college there has been significant staff development this year to prepare teachers for the introduction of Curriculum 2000.

49. The learning resources and the book stock in the CNWL learning centres are satisfactory and good for science. The learning resources at the Islamia School are generally poor. Students in the CNWL and Islamia School have good access to ICT facilities. Art and design students have up-to-date computers. Performing arts students have an excellent working theatre, a studio theatre, green rooms and gallery area.

50. In the training sector, eight sessions were observed, all of which were judged satisfactory or better, in construction, engineering and for foundation work; half were judged to be good.

51. A major strength of the training provision in Brent is the well-organised and effective off-the-job modern apprenticeship and national traineeship in construction and engineering. The CNWL is a leading provider for electrical installation apprenticeships in London north of the Thames, and is also highly regarded for training related to air-conditioning and refrigeration. In the training sessions observed, staff were well qualified and experienced. Trainees benefited from a supportive and professional approach by the staff, which created a positive atmosphere for learning. Key skills were effectively integrated into training programmes and trainees used the extensive practical resources to learn, practise and be assessed in the skills required for construction and engineering occupations. The tutors maintained effective progress tracking systems and gave regular feedback on progress to the trainees and their employers. Trainees are well supervised at work and they acquire job skills. In contrast, training at work is generally unplanned and in many cases there are no written schemes of work for on-the-job training. Systems for linking on and off-the-job training have not been fully developed. Insufficient assessment of trainees' occupational skills takes place at work and over-reliance is placed on off-the-job assessment in simulated

working environments. There is some good practice in relation to work-based training and assessment, which needs to be developed further.

52. In 1999, the CNWL introduced a well-structured modular programme of short courses in sports, computing, communication skills, self-motivation and confidence building, study skills and job search, mainly for disaffected and under-achieving 16 to 17 year-olds, in conjunction with the Learning Gateway and agreed by the Wembley Health Action Zone. The programme recruits mainly unemployed black young people from the Stonebridge Park and South Kilburn areas. Tutors have developed good relationships and understandings with this group of trainees, engaging them in positive learning experiences and identifying opportunities for training and employment suited to their needs. Around 50 per cent of the trainees completing this programme have progressed to FE or training.

53. ESOL and basic skills training courses for the application of number were also well run by the other training providers in Brent. Tutors used a variety of teaching methods and had a good understanding of the needs of the groups. They encouraged trainees to work on their own, and with each other, on well-prepared activities. Tutors also provided individual support where necessary, encouraging the trainees to persevere and providing positive reinforcement to their learning.

54. The numbers of trainees joining these motivational and basic skills training programmes are relatively small, given the levels of disadvantage, deprivation and disaffection among young people in several areas of Brent. There is a significant number of unemployed and disaffected youngsters who remain outside the scope of present recruitment. Lifetime Careers conducted a destinations survey in 1998 which found that three per cent of young people aged 16-19 were declared unemployed and a further ten per cent had destinations unknown. Recruiting and referral systems operated by job centres and support agencies are not sufficiently effective in reaching some sub-groups of completely disengaged young people in the borough.

SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

Guidance onto post-16 programmes

55. Schools have generally well-developed provision for careers education and guidance for Year 10 and Year 11 students, provided in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and tutor sessions, through talks in assemblies by heads of sixth forms and subject teachers, and through the work of the careers service company. The programmes are led by well-informed careers co-ordinators and some excellent schemes of work were identified on the inspection, providing pupils with a very wide range of written information and brochures about colleges and training opportunities, and including important diagnostic and occupational choice exercises, along with work experience. In one exceptional case there was no careers co-ordinator and the provision was unsatisfactory.

56. Lifetime Careers, negotiates "partnership agreements" on an annual basis with each school and college. They have contributed to the development of each school's careers education programme, and encourage schools to review the content and style of this provision. The company has a number of publications aimed at helping young people at key decision points for Year 9 students choosing GCSEs, for Year 11 students choosing post-16 options and for students leaving post-16 education. These are used well in the schools, as are the careers libraries which the company has helped to resource with up-to-date information about opportunities for FE and training in the neighbourhood.

57. Careers guidance interviews provided by careers advisers are now focused on those young people identified in priority categories as in need of additional attention and support. These include those for whom English is a second language, under-achievers, the excluded, the homeless, and those with special learning needs. In some schools, the partnership agreement provides for careers guidance interviews for all Year 11 students because of the high levels of need. Young people in the target groups are offered an individual careers guidance interview which results in a written careers guidance action plan including careers options and next steps. Students likely to achieve high grades in GCSEs may have the opportunity to attend group sessions run by the careers adviser, or they may be looked after entirely by the school's own careers education programme. Individual careers advisers are well regarded by the schools, but careers teachers and advisers alike expressed some concerns that higher-attaining students are receiving much less careers advice and guidance than the schools would like.

58. The college is not invited to attend school open evenings for parents or students, nor are college representatives able to talk directly to Year 11 leavers in schools. The schools are quite happy to provide information about what is available elsewhere, but in most cases it is left to the initiative of individual students if they wish to find out more. In one school, however, the careers co-ordinator had developed a well-conceived link course with the CNWL, in the summer term of Year 11, for students interested in progressing to vocational FE courses, particularly at the Wembley Park college site. The schools strongly promote their own sixth forms and most have very well developed, high quality sixth form prospectus documentation. The students interviewed in the sixth forms generally felt they had been provided with good information upon which to make their choices. Overall they were very content with what they had opted to do.

59. Students spoke positively of the guidance they were given before enrolling at the CNWL and found the staff very welcoming and helpful. There is good information and advice given to prospective students and the college course directory is sent to schools each year. The college runs an annual "Horizons" conference sponsored by the careers company and NWLTEC for school pupils. However, not all schools allow their pupils time to attend. This year the college is running summer taster schools for school pupils, in conjunction with the borough of Brent, in a range of popular vocational subjects. The college has a specialist careers centre to which students have access.

60. The careers company has good links with the training providers, including the college, and it refers many trainees into programmes to suit their needs. A recent audit of

Lifetime Careers' work to support disaffected young people and disadvantaged groups noted that the high retention rates are largely due to the expert ability of their personal advisers to understand the problems experienced by the young people. Nearly half of these workers are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The training providers carry out rigorous and well-documented induction of which trainees speak well

Support for students and trainees on post-16 programmes

61. Support for students on post-16 programmes in the college and in school sixth forms is generally good. Students' progress is closely monitored and appraised in school sixth forms by tutors and subject teachers, usually in relation to clearly set and agreed targets linked to prior GCSE attainments.

62. Overall progress in the sixth forms is usually reviewed at least every half term and in some cases students also complete subject tests to inform this review. These systems are extensive and impressive and have made a significant contribution to the regular improvements in examination results noted in the majority of sixth forms in Brent in recent years. However, in one school sixth form tutoring systems are not well developed and staff absences have meant that this aspect of the sixth form has received less attention than it deserves.

63. Young people on training programmes receive a good range of personal support and advice from their tutors, and additional careers guidance and advice is available from Lifetime Careers staff when needed. Support is provided to deal with housing and personal difficulties, and a formal job search is incorporated towards the end of the training programmes.

64. Guidance and support for students moving on to HE are major features of the tutorial programmes in the sixth forms. Tutors have generally good knowledge of the system of applications required by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), and many have received recent updating training for the new systems in place from September 2000. They work hard to ensure students meet the application deadlines and also make sensible choices in line with their capabilities. The high rates of university entry from the sixth forms are a good reflection of this consistent effort by teachers and students.

65. In the CNWL, there are comprehensive guidelines for the provision of tutorial support. All full-time and part-time students are entitled to a one-hour tutorial per week. For full-time students this includes group activities (such as work on understanding individual learning styles), individual meetings and progress reviews once per term. Part-time students on courses of less than five hours per week do not have a timetabled tutorial, although course tutors are expected to deliver tutorial support within the programme. The tutorials observed by inspectors were satisfactory or good. The college's guidance and counselling team has produced a wide range of tutorial handbooks for use by staff. These give clear concise guidance on the content and organisation of tutorials. Ninety-six per cent of students surveyed found their tutorials helpful. Students are also well supported by the student support team in the college. Qualified counsellors are available to discuss personal problems.

These are often associated with welfare rights or financial hardship. The college has made financial payments to 156 students from its hardship fund this year.

66. Valuable work is undertaken by the college's student liaison officers in a project aimed at supporting some 20 young people who are disaffected or at risk of dropping out of their courses. Officers agree inducement contracts with the students, which encourage them to complete their assignments. Workers regularly liaise with parents and staff. The majority of the 20 students have continued their course and are completing their coursework. Another project is supported by Include, a national charity for socially excluded 16-19 year-olds. The charity refers young people in the community to the student liaison team at the college.

67. Approximately ten per cent of students at the CNWL are identified as needing some form of learning support. Amongst these in 1999/2000 some 82 students needed language support integrated into their courses. A further 27 were identified as requiring specific support for learning difficulties/disabilities. The support for these students is strong. The college encourages course tutors to adapt their course materials and programmes to support their students effectively.

68. Post-course guidance is provided for students at the CNWL in tutorials by the college's advice, careers and counselling team. Individual appointments are also available. The college has a good link with Lifetime Careers service who also provide specialist careers advice to students. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have weekly careers tutorials. This enables the specialist adviser to get to know the students and their abilities well. In conjunction with members of the local community, the college runs a mentoring scheme for students. Community members and workers from Brent Social Exclusion Unit link up with students to motivate and encourage them, and so advise on problems. This scheme is now in its second year and there are plans to extend it.

MANAGEMENT, COLLABORATION AND LIAISON

69. In common with many general FE colleges, the CNWL does not make separate management or organisational arrangements for the 16-19 age group. Nevertheless, the college attaches importance to this age group. A new foundation programme combining vocational study with key skill development has been designed to attract young people who might not otherwise find opportunities locally. There is effective promotion of quality of opportunity within the college, for instance through the design of the curriculum, course content and enrichment activities, as well as through the monitoring of participation by different groups.

70. Secondary headteachers and their senior management teams value highly their sixth forms and see them as an integral part of the whole school. They place particular emphasis on the importance of meeting parents' aspirations for their children to be able to progress into sixth form education. The sixth forms are also regarded as important in attracting well-qualified teachers, and in providing role models for younger pupils. The sixth forms are generally well managed. Some need to evaluate their provision more carefully to ensure a

closer match to demand, or to update the curriculum and replace GCSE re-sit courses. Whilst advanced and intermediate GNVQs are well-established in the majority of the sixth forms, there are gaps in provision which should be attended to and could be overcome through closer collaboration between schools in neighbouring areas, particularly in Harlesden.

71. Training provision is generally well managed and there are good working relationships between NWLTEC and the training providers. The resources available for work-based training are relatively low compared to other London TECs but they are managed carefully and efficiently to maximise effectiveness. The TEC has worked to develop capacity among its providers through a process of contract management. There is a full-time adviser employed to liaise with schools and employers with regard to opportunities for work-based learning and apprenticeships.

72. NWLTEC has established good working partnerships with community groups, support organisations, employers and schools, and this has resulted in effective initiatives to widen access to training. It is closely involved in local consortia and working parties to identify training needs, as is the CNWL. Through the North West London Consortium of Colleges, linking Brent with the Harrow Colleges, both the NWLTEC and the college have played a significant role in forming the local learning partnership. This includes the Brent and Harrow LEAs, school headteachers representing sixth forms, the careers company and the employment service. It has submitted an action plan and a detailed Lifelong Learning plan to the Government Office for London. The learning plan includes well-conceived objectives for improving achievements of young people in training and education, addressing gaps in provision, and avoiding duplication of provision in the two boroughs. This plan is being put forward as the partnership's contribution to education and skills development for West London, in the context of the establishment of the West London Learning and Skills Council, which will encompass Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, and Hounslow.

73. Apart from the joint sixth form at the John Kelly Boys' and Girls' Schools, there is very little joint provision offered by 16-19 institutions in Brent. There is a general view across the sixth forms that collaboration is time-consuming and generally does not work well. Nevertheless, the participation of schools and colleges in the planning for the NWLLP is evidence of a shift away from competition towards co-operation and collaboration. Between the three sixth forms in the Harlesden area, at Willesden High School, Cardinal Hinsley Roman Catholic High School and the Convent of Jesus and Mary, there is clearly a case for investigating the potential for collaboration in order to stabilise the provision and make it more cost effective.

STRATEGY AND PLANNING

74. Until recently, the majority of secondary schools in Brent were grant-maintained schools and they developed, many with considerable success, outside LEA control. Throughout the period, secondary heads and the LEA maintained a strategic forum, but the LEA had no direct policy for 16-19 provision. It is now working with secondary

headteachers and within the learning partnerships to establish such a policy. There is increasing interest in co-operation and partnership.

75. In the absence of an overall borough-wide plan, decisions relating to post-16 education have been taken by individual schools and the college. The CNWL has clearly taken account of the strength of other local provision in sixth forms in deciding not to offer GCE A-levels for 16-19 year-olds. It has also developed access and foundation level provision which serves the needs of the borough well and which is not offered by the sixth forms.

76. Many other initiatives and sources of funding beyond those which are the responsibility of the LEA, the TEC, and the FEFC affect education and training provision in Brent. The resources coming from the Single Regeneration Budget, the European Social Fund and the New Deal for Communities all serve to improve access and participation in education and training and thus need to be included in the strategic planning for the Brent area.

77. The LEA, the TEC, school headteachers, the CNWL and the careers company have co-operated effectively in producing the Lifelong Learning Development plan which should be taken forward by the new Learning and Skills Council from April 2001.

78. In the field of training, the TEC has fulfilled its aims and objectives to develop quality training in the area through clear strategies at training provider level to develop provision for needy client groups in the 16-19 cohort. The relationships between the TEC and CNWL have been a key strength in this successful development. Effective use is made of socio-economic data by NWLTEC and the CNWL to inform long-term planning. This data is disseminated routinely for use by training providers.

COST EFFECTIVENESS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

79. Most headteachers are aware, in general terms, of how much the sixth form costs, and some have analysed in previous years whether the income received for sixth form students was actually being spent on the sixth form. In one-third of the schools, the proportion of staffing going into the sixth form matches closely the proportion of the school's income derived from Year 12 and Year 13 students, but in approximately two-thirds of the schools it exceeds it. On the other hand, in two of the schools with very large sixth forms, income from the sixth form is used to subsidise the main school.

80. Without national guidelines for estimating cost effectiveness, there has been little attempt to relate the costs of provision to its effectiveness as measured by outcomes and achievement. In this inspection, schools were asked to calculate the average costs of successful achievement of a level two and of a level three qualification. The results of the calculations indicate that overall the costs are mostly reasonable, but with quite substantial differences between individual schools. Generally, average costs of success tend to be lowest in the large sixth forms.

81. The college, in common with most institutions in the FE sector, does not manage financial resources for 16-19 year-olds separately from those for older students. Finance is delegated to cost centres such as teaching faculties and is regularly monitored through the college's management information systems, but calculations are not made as to the cost of individual students achieving particular qualifications.

APPENDIX A: NUMBERS OF 16-19 STUDENTS AND TRAINEES

Colleges and schools

INSTITUTION	PROGRAMMES: NUMBER OF STUDENTS											
	GCE A-Level	GNVQ Adv.	GNVQ Inter.	GNVQ Found.	NVQ	GCSE Full-time	BTEC	Other	Total	Y12	Y13	
Wembley High	64	29	19	6	—	—	—	—	118	72	46	
Willesden High	—	15	18	14	—	—	—	—	47	38	9	
Alperton	139	77	60	—	—	—	8	—	284	185	99	
Cardinal Hinsley	46	29	17	5	—	—	—	—	97	67	30	
Claremont	194	21	20	—	—	31	—	—	235*	126	109	
Copland	133	48	71	49	—	—	29	—	330	254	76	
Kingsbury	237	96	31	—	—	—	—	—	364	194	170	
Preston Manor	155	39	32	—	—	—	—	—	226	91	135	
Queens Park	32	71	14	—	—	—	—	—	117	83	34	
St Gregory's	130	12	—	—	—	9	—	—	151	81	70	
John Kelly Boys'	21	14	9	1	—	—	—	—	175	112	63	
John Kelly Girls'	68	38	10	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Convent Jesus & Mary	124	22	10	—	—	—	—	—	156	96	60	
Grove Park (special)	—	—	—	—	—	6	—	16	15*	11	4	
The College of North West London	114	297	218	203	—	187	—	456**	2091*	—	—	

* Total is more than the number of students because some take GCSE and GCE A-level subjects alongside their main award. The majority of GCE A-level students are taking single subjects. Only those at Islamia School are taking a programme of GCE A-levels.

** City & Guilds, basic skills and ESOL courses.

Training Providers

PROVIDER	PROGRAMMES: NUMBER OF TRAINEES			
	Modern apprentice	National trainee	Other	Total
The College of North West London (CNWL)	87	42	10	139
Head of Head Training	n/a	n/a	2	2
Training & Assessment Services	n/a	n/a	2	2
Building One-Stop Shop*	n/a	n/a	24	24
Total	87	42	38	167

*in conjunction with CNWL.

APPENDIX B: CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMMES

Main qualification programmes in colleges and schools

INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF COURSES/VOCATIONAL AREAS AVAILABLE										
	GCE A-Level	GNVQ Adv.	GNVQ Int.	GNVQ Found.	GCSE	NVQ level 1	NVQ level 2	NVQ level 3	Other		
Wembley High	12	3	3	3	3	—	—	—	—		
Willesden High	1	1	4	1	2	—	—	—	—		
Alperton	14	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—		
Cardinal Hinsley	18	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—		
Claremont	19	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—		
Copland	19	2	4	4	7	—	—	—	2**		
Kingsbury	21	5	3	—	3	—	—	—	—		
Preston Manor	18	1	4	—	2	—	—	—	—		
Queens Park	13	3	1	—	2	—	—	—	2		
St Gregory's	18	—	—	—	7	—	—	—	—		
John Kelly Boys'	13	2	4	1	3	—	—	—	—		
John Kelly Girls'	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
Convent Jesus & Mary	21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
Grove Park (special)	—	—	—	—	8	—	—	—	7		
The College of North West London	11 (Islamia School only) 2(CNWL)	7	8	6	6	10	21	5*	20*		

*These figures refer to the courses most popular with 16-19 year olds. In total there are 13 NVQ level 3 courses available in the college and 600 other courses.

**Access course.

Trainees: Numbers by occupational sector

OCCUPATIONAL AREA	PROGRAMMES: NUMBER OF TRAINEES			
	Modern apprentice	National trainee	Other	Sector total
Construction	18	13	26	57
Engineering	69	29	6	104
Foundation for Work	n/a	n/a	6	6
Programme total	87	42	38	167

APPENDIX C: COMPLETION RATES, EXAMINATION RESULTS AND QUALIFICATIONS ACHIEVED

Caution is needed in comparing college and school sector data for GCE A-levels in the tables below. Methods of calculating completion and pass rates are slightly different between colleges and schools, and have the effect of depressing the college figures in comparison with the school figures.

Institutional programme completion rates 1999.

INSTITUTION	PROGRAMME					
	GCE A-level	GNVQ Adv.	GNVQ Inter.	GNVQ Found.	GCSE	NVQ
Wembley High	56	80	88	80	—	—
Willesden High	—	50	54	—	—	—
Alperton	100	98	85	—	—	—
Cardinal Hinsley	55	75	94	64	—	—
Claremont	83	80	100	—	—	—
Copland	83	63	79	80	—	—
Kingsbury	100	100	100	—	—	—
Preston Manor	91	100	92	—	—	—
Queens Park	91	81	91	—	—	—
St Gregory's	90	83	—	—	—	—
John Kelly Boys'	58	66	100	66	—	—
John Kelly Girls'	94	94	67	78	—	—
Convent Jesus & Mary	90	86	100	—	—	—
Grove Park (special)	—	—	—	—	100	—
The College of North West London	49	45	69	61	63	56

Examination results 1999

INSTITUTION	Average GCE A level points score*	% PASS/ACHIEVEMENT RATES					
		GCE A-level	GNVQ Adv.	GNVQ Inter.	GNVQ Found.	GCSE A*-C	NVQ 1,2
Wembley High	13.3	94	100	65	89	—	—
Willesden High	2.3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Alperton	13.1	96	82	77	—	—	—
Cardinal Hinsley	10.8	79	100	87	91	—	—
Claremont	17.0	83	100	64	—	58	—
Copland	15.3	88	73	46	59	—	—
Kingsbury	17.6	92	94	95	—	24	—
Preston Manor	17.4	95	90	86	—	—	—
Queens Park	13	79	100	96	—	—	—
St Gregory's	14.8	92	—	—	—	—	—
John Kelly Boys'	7.7	67	100	70	50	24	—
John Kelly Girls'	12.1	76	80	67	87	—	—
Convent Jesus & Mary	14.4	90	80	100	—	—	—
Grove Park (special)	—	—	—	—	—	33	—
The College of North West London	—	58	68	61	42	38	46

*For students taking two or more GCE A-level subjects.

NVQs per 100 leavers per contract year

PROVIDER	NVQs Per 100 Leavers	
	1998/99	1999/00
College of North West London	47	56
Head to Head Training	n/a	n/a
Training & Assessment Services	n/a	62
Building One-Stop Shop	n/a	n/a
North West London TEC	51	61
Greater London average	61	60
England average	66	64