



Leading learning and skills

We are... making the nation more competitive

The Learning and Skills Council's
Annual Report and Accounts for 2003-2004

2003-2004

For individuals and organisations interested
in learning and skills

"What makes our new Lifelong Learning Centre such a great building? There's a 'wow' factor that makes people feel good about it. We've wrapped a state-of-the-art new building around a refurbished Victorian school: it works brilliantly, it's energy efficient and it's full of surprises.

This is part of a huge programme on four sites that's transforming City and Islington College. The LSC has been very supportive – and not just by putting up £14 million of the £60 million capital budget. The programme was driven by the need to develop an up-to-date new sixth-form college, which the LSC has helped us develop, plus three specialist vocational centres including this – our Centre for Lifelong Learning.

The change in the buildings is spectacular. What's not so obvious is the effect on individuals and the community. Demand for courses has shot up. In a better environment people behave differently – look, no graffiti. And in a generous space, well lit and well equipped, results improve.

Here we offer a rich mix of learning – from basic skills to IT, vocational training and university preparation for adults. One course can lead to others – for example, students aged between 16 and 18 will typically go on to Level 3 qualifications and many go on to university. The building includes a public library, which makes a terrific gateway to the college for people of all ages.

In Islington, 30% of the local population are from black and ethnic-minority backgrounds – whereas that figure is almost 60% of the college population. You can hear 30 languages in this building. Many of our students have brought valuable skills to this country and, by funding specialist English language training, the LSC is helping us unlock those skills for local employers. When we opened for new registrations in September 2004, there was a queue down the road like the Harrods sale. The place is now so popular that we're busy at weekends and all through the summer."



Peter Marsh, Deputy Principal, City and Islington College

World-class buildings for world-class teaching

In the past four years we've invested £675 million in 381 capital projects worth a total of almost £2 billion.

We're investing more each year. In 2003-2004 we approved grants of £330 million to support 159 projects worth a total of £935 million.

Modern facilities make a big difference. At City and Islington the percentage of 16- to 18-year-olds successfully completing their courses has gone from 53% in 2000 to 71% in 2004. Among adults, it's up from 50% to 74%.

Demand has risen sharply too. In 2000 the college had 2,600 full-time students aged 16 to 18. It expects to have 3,200 full-time students in 2005.

City and Islington College is one of the country's largest general Further Education (FE) colleges, and now includes a brand new sixth-form college.

In total, 85% of A Level students are in LSC-funded FE colleges, school sixth forms or sixth-form colleges.

Some 42% of full-time entrants to higher education come from further education.

(Figure from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service – UCAS)

Main picture

Students Chibuike Echebolu and Figen Wysal in City and Islington's new Lifelong Learning Centre.