

Lewisham College

Inspection report

Unique reference number:	130415
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Type of provider:	General further education college
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Information about the provider

1. Lewisham College is a large general further education (GFE) college in the borough of the same name, in south-east London. As with most London colleges, learners come from a wide range of locations; around a third are from Lewisham itself, with large numbers also from Southwark and Greenwich. The college is based on two main sites towards the north of the borough. Lewisham is ranked as the 31st most deprived of 326 local authorities in England, and is characterised by significant socio-economic and educational disadvantages. The college operates in a competitive environment in which many students cross borough boundaries to have access to learning; in and around the local area, there are other GFE and sixth form colleges, schools with sixth forms, and academies.
2. The college's curriculum offer is geared heavily towards vocational and work-based provision and it does not offer traditional academic courses. Courses are offered from pre-entry to higher education level. In 2010/11 the college attracted over 10,500 learners, around half of whom were of Black and minority ethnic heritage, with more male than female learners. Most learners are adults, although around half the students on full-time courses are aged 16 to 18. On college-based provision around half of all learners are on courses at foundation level, and a third on intermediate-level courses. On work-based provision, there were around 290 apprentices, and over 3,000 learners on National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in the workplace (formerly Train to Gain). The number of apprentices has risen in the current year, with nearly 900 in learning at the time of the inspection. The employer-based provision is organised through a dedicated unit called 'The Skills People'.
3. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - Knights Training Academy
 - Impress Ventures Training
 - Communities Into Training and Employment (CITE)
 - SEETEC
 - Lexus Security Management Ltd/SIA Services UK.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
<p>Provision for young learners: 14 to 16</p> <p>Further education (16 to 18)</p> <p>Foundation learning</p>	<p>113 full-time learners 463 part-time learners</p> <p>2,269 full-time learners 288 part-time learners</p> <p>1,310 full-time learners 101 part-time learners</p>
<p>Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)</p>	<p>2,180 full-time learners 2,202 part-time learners</p>
<p>Employer provision: National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in the workplace Apprenticeships</p>	<p>3,362 learners</p> <p>270 apprentices</p>

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Grade 3
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

Subject areas	
Health care and early years	2
Hospitality and catering	3
Sport, travel and tourism	3
English for speakers of other languages	2
Foundation learning	2

Overall effectiveness

- Lewisham College has many strengths, but also, as it recognises, some weaknesses. The college is highly inclusive and strives hard to help its learners to overcome any barriers they face to progressing to employment or further training. Its partnership working with the local authority, community groups and employers is exemplary. Learners from all backgrounds benefit from the harmonious and respectful atmosphere that permeates the culture of the college. Arrangements for supporting learners with a complex range of personal and welfare concerns are excellent. However, the proportion of learners who complete their qualifications successfully has not improved over the last three years, and there is too much variation in the quality of provision across the college. Attendance at lessons remains stubbornly low, and the college recognises that poor attendance often leads to learners not completing their

courses. The quality of teaching, although improving, is not yet consistently good across the college; very good teaching in some areas is mirrored by less effective teaching in others. However, efforts to improve the consistency and quality of teaching and learning, particularly through the effective use of new technologies and well-targeted staff training, are well judged.

5. Leaders and managers know their college well, and have taken appropriate action to strengthen its financial position and develop the curriculum to meet changing priorities. A clear strategy for the future development of the college is being implemented thoughtfully. Leaders and managers at all levels have been less successful in improving learners' outcomes, although recent improvements in curriculum and performance management are beginning to have a positive impact. The college evaluates its strengths and weaknesses rigorously and largely accurately, although some judgements made in the self-assessment report are generous.

Main findings

- Learners' outcomes are satisfactory, although this overall judgement masks significant differences between ages and subject areas. Not enough younger learners achieve their qualifications. The proportion of learners who complete and achieve their qualifications is high in a minority of subject areas, but low in others.
- A similarly mixed picture is apparent in work-based learning. Employees taking National Vocational Qualifications achieve very well. However, the growing numbers of apprentices do less well, with too many taking too long to achieve their qualifications.
- Attendance at lessons is unsatisfactory. In most, but not all, areas of the college concerted efforts are being made to improve attendance and punctuality, but these are yet to have sufficient impact.
- The standard of learners' work is variable. Many learners develop good practical skills and the college's strong focus on employability benefits significant numbers of learners. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners make particularly good progress. Systems to measure the progress that learners make from their starting points are underdeveloped.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are successful in developing learners' confidence and in promoting a calm and harmonious atmosphere. Inspectors agree with the judgement in the college self-assessment report that too much teaching remains satisfactory.
- In some areas, such as performing arts, ESOL and provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, learners make good progress, attend regularly and enjoy their studies. Teachers promote equality and diversity themes successfully and provide learners with good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy alongside their specific subject-related skills.

- Where learning is only satisfactory, lessons are sometimes dull and teachers do not always check students' learning or provide activities to meet the needs and abilities of all learners. Learners' attendance is poor and the learners make slow progress.
- The college provides a broad and highly inclusive range of courses with good progression routes from entry level to advanced level and onto higher education in many areas. The college responds well to local needs and has developed particularly good provision for those learners not in employment, education or training. Learners benefit from an extensive range of work experience.
- The use of partnerships to develop provision to meet the needs of learners is outstanding. The very strong and collaborative strategic relationships benefit learners and promote inclusion. Particularly strong partnership work with schools and the local authority has benefited young people not in education, employment or training.
- Learners receive appropriate advice and guidance prior to joining the college and induction is welcoming and helps them settle quickly into their courses. Initial assessment is thorough and is used well to identify the support needs of learners, and those learners who receive additional support achieve well. The support for learners' welfare and personal issues is outstanding.
- The tutorial system is less well developed. The effectiveness of the tracking and monitoring of learners' progress varies significantly across the college. Group tutorials take place at the discretion of heads of department. In some areas learners still have a good and varied tutorial programme but this is not consistent across the college.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college has undergone significant change in the last two years and has strengthened its financial position and streamlined its management structure. New managers are now in place and staffing is stable. However, managers are on occasion too slow in identifying and tackling areas of weaker performance.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college provides a harmonious, welcoming, safe and respectful environment. It strives to meet the needs of a diverse community of students and data are analysed rigorously to identify the performance of particular groups. Wider aspects of equality and diversity are promoted particularly well in a number of areas but, again, this is not consistent throughout the college.
- The college has well-considered and thorough processes for self-assessment and quality improvement but they have not prevented a slight decline in success rates during the period of organisational reform. The quality of provision in subject areas is too variable and a number has been no better than satisfactory for some time. Where intensive support is given to weaker areas, improvement is evident.

What does Lewisham College need to do to improve further?

- Raise attendance rates through a relentless and consistent expectation by all staff that all learners, regardless of their individual circumstances, need to attend all lessons on time.
- Identify the precise characteristics that underpin the best teaching and learning in the college and ensure that these are shared effectively, for example through staff development, in order to improve the consistency and quality of teaching across the college.
- Improve the rigour and consistency of target setting for learners by ensuring that all teachers develop the skills to monitor progress and set precise targets for learners, and that managers oversee the consistent implementation of these processes.
- Make better use of both individual and group tutorials to reinforce expectations about the high standards of attendance and work expected, and to ensure that intervention is swift where learners are at risk of not succeeding.
- Develop managers' skills to deploy effective techniques both to manage their staff and provide innovative and urgent solutions to weaknesses in quality, so that interventions in all weaker areas are swift and effective in ensuring that more learners succeed.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the convenient location of the college and good transport links
- the good reputation of the college, and the friendly atmosphere
- the fact that staff treat younger learners like adults and show them respect
- the focus on improving learners' employment prospects
- the support from staff when learners have personal problems
- the good support for dyslexia and mental health issues
- good facilities and resources to help students learn.

What learners would like to see improved:

- some interruptions to learning due to noise in corridors and occasional poor behaviour in classes
- more information on progression opportunities and how to access them
- some poor arrangements for examinations
- the high cost of food in the canteen.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- strong commitment to collaborating with employers and other providers to widen opportunities for learners and trainees
- good communication between college staff and employers
- very good attention to the needs of apprentices.

What employers would like to see improved:

- no recommendations for improvement were received from employers.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

6. The college has undergone significant change in the last two years in order to strengthen its financial position and streamline its management structure. The new structure is now in place and management is stable. The financial position of the college is much improved, and a clear strategy for the future development of the college is in place. The quality of teaching and learning has started to improve and there are indications that new managers are having a positive impact in leading their areas to success. More students are still on their courses than at the same time last year. However, success rates declined slightly last year to below the national average. The college's processes for self-assessment and quality improvement are thorough, although not yet fully effective. Data are analysed rigorously. Strengths and areas for improvement identified through self-assessment are largely accurate, although insufficient weighting is attached to weaknesses when grading some areas.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

7. The proportion of learners who complete their qualifications successfully has not improved over the last three years, and declined slightly in 2010/11. On long courses, the success rate is below the national average for similar colleges. It is particularly low for learners aged 16 to 18, too many of whom leave their course before completing. Success rates for adult learners are broadly in line with the national average. The overall picture disguises significant variations between subject areas. For example, while success rates are high in health care and performing arts, they are low in engineering and construction. In work-based learning, achievements are good for the large number of learners taking NVQs in the workplace. However, for the smaller, but growing, number of apprentices, success rates are too low. As with college-based courses, there is too much variation in the achievements of work-based learners between subject areas. Although there are variations in the achievements of learners from different ethnic heritages, these are not consistent over time. Learners identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve slightly better than the college average.
8. Those learners who complete their courses generally make satisfactory or better progress in developing their skills and knowledge, although the college has yet to develop effective measures to gauge learners' progress from their starting points. Many learners make good progress in improving their practical skills in vocational areas, and ESOL learners become increasingly adept at communicating effectively. However, the strong focus on improving learners' employment prospects is only partially successful. The college does much to prepare learners for work and help employees to learn new skills, and has a good track record of helping people back into learning. However, these strengths are offset by weaknesses in the development of learners' literacy and

numeracy, and in the sporadic attendance at college and poor punctuality to lessons shown by too many learners.

9. The college provides a particularly safe haven for learners, a significant proportion of whom face significant challenges in their home lives. Learners say, and inspectors agree, that the college is a harmonious environment in which tolerance and respect for others are valued highly. College staff do what they can to encourage learners to lead healthy lifestyles, and expert advice is readily available to support learners with health concerns. Many learners use their time at college to contribute productively to the college community, and a minority engage in voluntary work outside the college.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

10. Inspectors agree with the judgement in the college self-assessment report that too much teaching remains satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning varies too much between and within subject areas in the college. Where teaching is consistently good or better, for example in performing arts, ESOL and provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, attendance at lessons is higher than the college average, teachers set high professional standards, and learning activities are varied and stimulating. Learners enjoy lessons and make good progress, as ascertained by teachers' regular checks on learning. Equality and diversity are promoted well, and learners are provided with good opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy. Learners are encouraged to use relevant technical vocabulary, to show how their skills are progressing, and they know what they have to do to improve. In lessons for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, teachers are skilled at managing learners' behaviour and providing activities for learners that develop craft and other useful skills. High standards are set and expected of learners, who respond positively to these challenges.
11. However, where learning is only satisfactory, the teaching is sometimes dull and pedestrian. In theory lessons, the teachers do not always check students' learning or provide activities to meet the needs and abilities of the learners. Although teachers have detailed records on learners' prior attainment and aptitudes, they do not always use these effectively to set interesting activities for the learners. Learners' attendance is often poor and learners make slow progress. In some cases, literacy and numeracy activities are not put in a vocational context and as a result learners do not appreciate the relevance of the activities and lose interest. For example, in hospitality and catering, subject staff do not always feel confident to develop learners' literacy skills and learners do not benefit from in-class additional support.
12. Assessment is good and most teachers provide helpful and detailed written feedback. In work-based learning, assessments are well planned and supported by innovative electronic resources that encourage learners to work independently and to demonstrate their developing confidence and competence in their job roles.

13. Resources for learning are good and there are no shortages of specialist learning equipment. Teachers are well qualified and have good subject and vocational expertise. Learners appreciate the well-developed learning materials that they can access on the college's virtual learning environment.
14. The arrangements for observing staff teach are well organised. The judgements arising from lesson observations report reasonably accurately on the main strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning across the college. However, they do not always put enough emphasis on the impact that poor attendance and punctuality have on learning. In a minority of lesson observations, not enough weight is given to weaknesses, strengths are over estimated and judgments are too generous. Support for teachers following observations is good and recent continuing professional development for teachers has focused appropriately on improving key aspects of teaching and learning. E-learning is particularly well supported by an active group of managers and teachers who have made rapid progress in developing useful on-line materials and initiatives to help teachers improve their practice.
15. The college offers a broad and inclusive range of courses with good progression routes from entry to advanced levels in most areas. There is also a small but growing provision in foundation degrees. Provision for learners who are difficult to engage in education has been successfully expanded. For example, the work with local young people who are not in education, employment or training is very good with the vast majority progressing to full-time courses either at the college or elsewhere. There is significant provision for learners aged 14 to 16, including a full-time programme, on which many learners have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2011, 90% of the learners aged 14 to 16 progressed to further training. The availability of enrichment opportunities varies across curriculum areas. In some areas, such as art, design and media, the enrichment to courses is excellent, but in some areas enrichment is only satisfactory.
16. The development of provision to meet employer needs is very good. Through 'The Skills People', an extensive range of work-based training has been developed. Very effective partnership working with employers has ensured good work experience for many learners and increased apprenticeship provision. The college has been successful in developing courses for unemployed people in partnership with Jobcentre Plus. The courses are designed to enable learners to develop knowledge in specific employment sectors and to gain skills which will help them to employment.
17. Outstanding partnership working brings significant benefits for learners. The college has developed very strong, collaborative partnerships with employers, schools, local organisations, the local authority and other London boroughs, and uses these to tailor its provision to the diverse needs of the local community. The college has particularly strong links with the local authority through the Local Strategic Partnership and its work to help reduce the number of young people not in employment, education or training has been highly successful. Strong links with the health authority have led to some innovative work in

reducing teenage pregnancies, and work with youth offending teams has ensured young offenders have been accepted into college and been afforded the opportunity of gaining qualifications which help to make them employable. The college pays good attention to the particular needs of 'looked-after' younger learners.

18. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Potential learners receive appropriate advice and guidance. Induction is thorough and welcoming and ensures learners settle well into the college. Support for welfare and personal issues is outstanding. Learners benefit from specialist advice from an 'engagement and support' team on finance, health, welfare, legal and employment matters. Counselling services are used well and a life-gym drop-in programme, introduced in 2010, has significantly helped learners with mental health issues. Learners identified as at risk of leaving before completion are offered a range of support to help retain them on their courses, and those who take advantage of this are more likely to stay at college. A 'study buddy' scheme to support learners is also effective.
19. The tutorial system is less well developed. Although learners have an entitlement to individual tutorials, between these formal reviews the tracking and monitoring of learners' progress vary significantly between subject areas. There was little evidence of effective monitoring in too many of the learner personal development plans reviewed during the inspection. Too many targets are not precise enough to help learners improve and the monitoring of learners' progress against the targets set for them is inconsistent across the college. The provision for group tutorials varies across the college as the arrangements for these are at the discretion of individual departments. Some learners receive few or no group sessions. A new attendance monitoring policy has been introduced, but it is yet to have an impact on the poor attendance on many courses.
20. Support for students with additional learning needs is good. Initial assessment is used well to identify the support learners require to help them be successful on their courses. Support is quickly put in place, is well organised and targeted at those in most need. Those learners who receive support make good progress and have higher achievement rates than those who do not. Support for learners with dyslexia is particularly good.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

21. Major changes over the last two years, driven by the new college Principal, have resulted in the college moving to a new structure with fewer managers and staff and a renewed focus on performance management. A clear and coherent strategy for the future development of the college is in place. Effective actions have been taken to improve the college's financial position and to streamline college management. The large-scale change to the management of curriculum areas caused considerable disruption. While success rates declined slightly in 2010/11, there are indications that new managers are starting to have a positive effect in leading their areas to success. They have undertaken well-focused training to equip them for their new roles. The quality of teaching and learning

is starting to improve. Issues around the reliability of data have largely been remedied. College targets for students' success rates are appropriate, but targets for attendance are not sufficiently high in all areas.

22. Governors are well informed about the key issues facing the college. College finances are now healthy and the commercial section of the college is successful. Governors provide challenge and bring a range of relevant expertise, mainly from the public sector. They monitor the college's academic and financial performance closely. Governors recognise that disruption to curriculum management had a negative effect on students' success rates in 2010/11 and pay close attention to the potential impact of the college's future plans. Useful links are in place between individual governors and different curriculum or functional areas of the college.
23. Safeguarding students is a priority at college and arrangements for this are good. A detailed range of well-considered policies provides a strong framework for all operational activities. The college has comprehensive procedures for recruitment and checks on staff are in place. Staff and governors have been trained in the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is monitored closely and frequent reports are provided to senior managers and governors. The college has strong and effective links with a range of external agencies to promote the safeguarding of learners.
24. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college provides a respectful, caring and harmonious environment for students. Its single equality scheme clearly sets out what the college aims to achieve and how it will do that for each equality strand. All students receive training in equality and diversity during induction but the content is not standardised in every area. Very good examples of the promotion of equality are included in a number of curriculum areas but coverage is not consistently good across the college. A detailed analysis of data is undertaken each year to evaluate the relative performance of different groups of students. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those receiving additional learning support have higher success rates than the average for the college. Success rates for 16- to 18-year-old students on long qualifications were significantly lower than for adults in 2010/11.
25. The college's response to the views of students and employers is good. Around 250 students act as course representatives and attend frequent departmental meetings to share their views and concerns with senior staff. About a quarter of course representatives attend six-weekly forums with the Principal. Feedback from students is carefully considered and has resulted in many useful changes being made, such as rescheduling assignments so that students are not overloaded and extending the opening hours of the support and learning centre. Students participate in focus groups for equality strands and contribute to the review of policies. Feedback from employers is gathered systematically by the business arm of the college and it is used effectively to improve services. Feedback from employers linked to curriculum areas is less comprehensive but it has influenced changes to qualifications in a number of areas.

26. The college implements well-considered processes for self-assessment and quality improvement, although these were not successful in preventing a slight decline in success rates during the period of organisational change. Self-assessment indicates that the quality of provision in subject areas is too variable, with provision ranging from outstanding to inadequate. Data and other evidence are analysed thoroughly as part of the self-assessment process. Internal inspections of areas take place every three years, or sooner if needed, and intensive support provided for weak areas helps them to improve. Targets in quality improvement plans in curriculum areas do not always specify exactly what, and how, improvements are to be made. Self-assessment is clear and analytical and generally identifies strengths and areas for improvement accurately. However, insufficient weight is given to weaknesses and several areas are graded too highly.
27. Value for money is satisfactory. Outcomes for students are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to attain their learning goals. The college engages well with students and considers their views. Resources are managed effectively and meet students' needs.

Subject areas

Health care and early years

Grade 2

Context

28. Six hundred and twenty five learners are enrolled on courses in health care and early years, and access programmes to health professions. Nearly 500 learners take long courses, with just over half being adults. Around 200 learners take short courses. Most provision is at foundation and intermediate levels, with only a small amount of advanced-level provision. Programmes are offered from foundation to higher education level.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The proportion of students who complete their courses successfully rose significantly in 2010/11 and is above the national average for similar colleges, having been below average in previous years. Inspection evidence suggests that this improvement is sustainable. Success rates on advanced-level courses in care remain low.
- Attendance at lessons is poor, although good support is provided for those who for good reason cannot attend to work at home. The college virtual learning environment and email are used very effectively to support private study.
- Learners produce work of a good standard, both oral and written, and take pride in their work. They contribute well to class discussion, showing a fluent grasp of key concepts and secure evidence that they have remembered previous work. They use specialist vocabulary and terminology confidently. Learners have a good understanding of the legislative framework of the care and early years sectors.
- Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on health and safety throughout the programme and, as a consequence, learners have a good understanding of their responsibilities to ensure that the workplace is safe. Learners report that the college provides a safe and harmonious environment in which to learn. Displays in and around classrooms do not adequately reflect good practice in mirroring workplace environments, for example a nursery.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and draw on their extensive vocational experience to motivate learners and to link theory to professional practice. Learners work very productively with teachers and with each other, and are making good progress in meeting their planned targets.
- Teachers use a wide range of well-chosen interactive teaching and learning activities in lessons which interest learners, making good use of technology. Students contribute with confidence to the well-managed group work activities. Students' presentations in lessons are carefully prepared, and peer assessment is thoughtful and constructive.

- Learners make good links between theory and practice. They draw on their work placement, their personal experience of care services and other life experience to illustrate issues and care dilemmas raised in lessons. For example, early years students created a very good numeracy activity, set in the context of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, to use on placement and to evaluate in their next lesson.
- Assessment is good. Feedback from tutors provides clear and constructive guidance for improvement. Learners understand the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.
- The range of provision is satisfactory. Full-time courses are designed to meet the skill shortages in the care and early years sectors. There are, however, few short courses to directly meet the needs of employers in this sector; for example, in the administration of medicines and dementia care.
- Opportunities for work experience for early years students are good, but provision for health and social care students is underdeveloped. Work placement experience is not in place for foundation and intermediate-level students. Advanced-level students find their own placements but there are often unacceptable delays.
- Partnerships with schools, employers and community groups are satisfactory. In early years in particular there are good links with a wide range of early years settings in the borough. Students are involved in the 'Bridging the Gap' project and with 'Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities'.
- Pastoral support for students is very good. Teachers know their students well and use a wide range of strategies to support students at risk of leaving or failing their course. Detailed records are kept of the support provided by the college and the other agencies with which tutors work.
- A high profile is given to the promotion of equality and diversity, and learners' understanding of the importance of these issues in their present and future work is good.
- Leadership and management are good. Management action to raise success rates, particularly by improving retention, has been effective. Self-assessment is detailed and evaluative. Staff at all levels understand the agreed actions to support students at risk of failing their course. Staff development priorities have supported the improvement of teaching and learning.

What does Lewisham College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that college-wide strategies to improve attendance at lessons are implemented rigorously and consistently by all staff.
- Consider increasing the range of short part-time programmes in health and social care to meet the needs of care sector employees.
- Ensure that classroom displays are of a consistently high standard so that they mirror the standards expected in care and early years work environments.

- Develop further the opportunities for work experience on health and social care programmes.

Hospitality and catering

Grade 3

Context

29. The college offers a range of programmes from intermediate to advanced level in hospitality and culinary arts. At the time of the inspection, 121 learners were on full-time courses. The provision includes 30 pupils aged 14 to 16, and 46 learners on NVQ and apprenticeship programmes.

Key findings

- Success rates for NVQ food preparation and cooking at level 2 and professional cookery courses at advanced level are high, as are those for intermediate-level apprentices. Overall success rates on long courses are below national averages. In 2010/11 success rates for adult learners improved significantly and were high. However for learners aged 16 to 18, who represent most learners on long courses, success rates were low.
- Practical skills development is satisfactory and learners develop the ability to understand and use correct technical language well. Learners have a good understanding of food hygiene and demonstrate safe handling of food. They develop a sound grasp of the principles of cooking, and develop their employability skills well. Learners' progression onto further training and employment is satisfactory.
- Attendance at lessons observed during the inspection was poor. Strategies aimed at improving regular attendance by consistent reporting and follow through of absenteeism have not had sufficient impact to bring about improvement. Punctuality was satisfactory.
- In the better lessons learners benefit from careful one-to-one coaching to develop individual skills and competencies, and theory is integrated well. Mathematical skills are reinforced effectively in practical lessons and learners apply their knowledge well; for example, by correctly scaling up, adjusting the seating plan for the restaurant and converting volume into service requirements. However, there is insufficient focus on helping learners to improve their literacy skills.
- In a minority of lessons teachers talk for too long to hold learners' attention, the pace is slow and there are insufficient opportunities for the more able learners to develop to a level that matches their prior ability. In a minority of instances some poor theoretical understanding, poor craft skills and unsafe handling of knives were uncorrected.
- The promotion of equality and the recognition of diversity in lessons are weak. The richness of many culinary traditions is not evident in lesson documentation or, more importantly, in learning. Learners have low levels of understanding

with regards to sustainable food production, ethical sourcing of food and the cultural heritage of the vast majority of dishes prepared, cooked and presented.

- The current curriculum design fails to provide for the full range of learner and employer needs. In particular 16- to 18-year-old learners spend too much time in the college restaurant and do not have taught classes to develop their cooking and service skills or to build their confidence sufficiently to enable them to deal with paying customers.
- Partnership working is fruitful and benefits learners through providing work experience and financial support, and promoting a vision for world class skills development. Collaboration with industry benefactors ensures sponsorship of knives and equipment for individual learners, taster days and work experience. Industry professionals contribute by judging practical competitions and by visiting the college to give talks and demonstrations to share their knowledge.
- Pastoral support is a highly effective feature of the department. Tutors respond well to the many and complex individual circumstances learners face, ensuring swift and effective resolution to learners' causes of concern. However, individual support for the very many learners who have low levels of literacy is insufficient to enable them to achieve as well as they might, and many work-based learners struggle to understand technical mathematical language.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Management development and training have resulted in a significant improvement in communications and a more accountable culture within the department. All staff have a clear understanding of their individual course targets and regularly review the progress of learners who may be at risk of not achieving.
- The department promotes tolerance and respect amongst staff and learners. However, the observation of teaching and learning reports do not identify the shortcomings in the promotion of equality and diversity in lessons.
- Improvements to the self-assessment process have resulted in a more inclusive approach and better monitoring by the team of the identified areas for improvement. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and analytical, although it fails to identify and tackle the underlying causes of low success rates sufficiently. Limited use is made of external benchmarking or sector best practice to judge provision objectively and set targets for improvement.

What does Lewisham College need to do to improve further?

- Provide effective support for learners to improve their literacy, both in and out of lessons, to improve their chances of success.
- Review how the curriculum is structured to allow time for dedicated development of practical cooking and service skills to enable all learners to meet their potential fully.
- Ensure the sustainability agenda that is so relevant to the industry is recognised, and that the richness of many cultural traditions is promoted positively in all aspect of teaching, learning and assessment.

Sport, travel and tourism

Grade 3

Context

30. The college offers a range of courses in sport and travel and tourism, with clear progression routes from foundation level to advanced level. Of the 327 full-time students, around 80% are on sports-related courses, with the remainder on travel and tourism or air cabin crew programmes. Over half of the learners are on courses at intermediate level. Most learners on sports courses are male; most learners on travel and tourism programmes are female.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. In 2010/11, there was a marked difference in success rates between sports-related courses and travel and tourism programmes, with low success rates in sport and high success rates in travel and tourism. Too many sports learners leave their courses before they have completed. In 2009/10, success rates in sport had been significantly higher; there is no clear upward trend in the proportion of students who complete successfully.
- Standards of work observed during the inspection were satisfactory. Learners demonstrate secure practical sports and cabin crew skills and work safely in practical lessons. Sports students demonstrate their skills confidently during practical coaching sessions, for example by analysing training zones correctly and improving their technical and tactical football skills. Written work is of a satisfactory standard.
- A strong focus on preparing learners for employment is supported by good work placements. Sound professional standards are maintained; for example, expectations about the correct wearing of uniform in travel courses, and good discipline in sports, are reinforced consistently. Progression rates to employment and further training are satisfactory. However, attendance at lessons is poor, and efforts to improve this have met with little success.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although the quality of teaching is better in practical sessions than in theory lessons. In practical lessons, teachers are adept at using their industry expertise to help learners to develop the skills and competences they need to make good progress through a well-devised range of learning activities.
- In theory lessons, too often learners are not sufficiently interested because the work is neither stimulating nor tailored to their individual needs, and checks on their learning through regular assessment are weak. Learners of higher ability do not always find the work sufficiently challenging. Too many lessons are no better than satisfactory.
- The range of provision is well suited to the needs of industry, although it is relatively narrow; for example, in sport there is a strong emphasis on football

and basketball. Few industry-specific qualifications to supplement learners' main programme of study are currently available.

- Productive partnerships with a wide range of employers in sports and fitness, aviation, travel and tourism are beneficial to learners. For example, their understanding of industry is enhanced through regular visits to employers' premises. Apprentices run a commercial gym successfully. Resources are of a good standard.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Information, advice and guidance are effective in helping learners to choose the right course, and in guiding them towards their future options. Initial assessment is used well to identify learners who would benefit from additional support, and such support is well targeted. Learners' progress is monitored carefully, although interventions to support learners at risk of not completing are not always fast enough.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. In sport, the department recognises that its curriculum offer is more likely to attract male learners, and is reviewing the provision to attract more female learners. Learners in football benefited from a session that raised their awareness of homophobia. Issues around equality are seldom explicit in lesson plans.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Course teams seek to improve standards through systematic monitoring of learners' progress, leading to appropriate interventions to support students to succeed. However, this has yet to have sufficient impact in improving learners' outcomes, particularly in sport. Self-assessment reports are detailed and evaluative, and use data analysis to focus on key areas for improvement, although this is yet to have sufficient impact.

What does Lewisham College need to do to improve further?

- Increase retention and achievement on full-time courses for learners aged 16 to 18, particularly in sport, by ensuring that any signs of slippage in learners' attendance or commitment are identified and acted upon swiftly.
- Improve the quality of teaching in theory lessons by identifying and implementing strategies that improve learning through providing more interesting and varied tasks that are closely matched to learners' abilities. Make effective use of staff training so that all staff recognise the constituents of good teaching of theory.
- Review the curriculum offer to identify industry-specific qualifications for the sports and travel and tourism industries that could be added to learners' main programmes. Review the sports academy curriculum with a view to broadening the range of options open to potential learners.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

Grade 2

Context

31. At the time of the inspection, around 1,300 learners were enrolled on ESOL courses, which is a slightly higher number than at the equivalent point in the previous year. The majority of learners are adults. Courses are offered between pre-entry level and level 2 in day-time and evening provision. All courses run on the main college site.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Despite recent changes to course structure, achievement rates on discrete ESOL courses are high, particularly for learners on the full ESOL programme. Efforts to improve the proportion of learners who complete their courses have had a positive impact recently. Concerted efforts to improve attendance and punctuality have had some effect, although both remain below the targets set by the department.
- Standards in speaking and listening are very good. Learners can read texts with accuracy, fluency and growing confidence. They talk freely in class, are keen to ask questions and support one another with difficult tasks. They work well in pairs and small groups, collaborating well to improve their conversational skills.
- Learners make very good progress in developing their employability and citizenship skills. They are clearly focused on their desire to find work or improve their job prospects. Learners improve their confidence levels so that they take a more active role within their families and communities. Several learners have seen improvements in spoken language to enable them to talk more freely with doctors about serious health issues.
- On completing their courses most learners progress smoothly onto higher level courses or have obtained the language skills to enable them to start a full vocational programme. A small but increasing number of students has obtained regular paid employment.
- The quality of provision is outstanding, as are teaching and learning. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed and comprehensive. They are used effectively to personalise learning so that each learner's particular goals are incorporated into the lesson content. Learners enjoy the rich variety of interesting learning tasks which are made relevant to everyday life and to their desire for employment.
- Assessment is used effectively to understand each learner's starting point and identify any particular additional learning needs. This information is used to make lessons as productive as possible for each learner. Informal assessment in lessons is varied and recapitulation sessions often involve learners in relatively sophisticated assessment of their own and others' learning.
- The range of provision is very good with courses running from pre-entry level to level 2. Provision is enhanced by the wide range of ESOL-based vocational

starter courses that are effective in supporting the learners' vocational aspirations while providing the language skills needed to complete a more advanced course successfully.

- The work of the department in forming partnerships that benefit their learners is outstanding. The head of department plays a full part in strategic planning at a local authority and regional level and this ensures that the college's own offer matches the demand from local communities. Good relationships with local authority social service departments ensure that the large numbers of 'looked-after' younger learners are supported properly.
- Care and support for learners are outstanding. Teachers and others within the department go to exceptional lengths to support the most vulnerable of their learners; for example, by visiting them in detention centres and providing practical support for a range of non-educational needs. Over 120 learners receive additional targeted support through 42 study skills sessions.
- Much support is focused on helping learners to progress into employment. Support in enabling students to develop realistic progression plans is a strong part of the provision. Progression fairs, which learners find very helpful, are held within the department.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Managers are aware of even small variations in performance by different groups of students and the plan to tackle these issues is having a positive impact. Lesson plans take account of opportunities to promote issues relating to individual difference and diversity. In one lesson the situation of Third World farmers was productively addressed during a literacy lesson.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The head of department has a well-articulated strategic vision for the ESOL provision which is targeted at employability. Communication within this large and complex department is very good. Teachers understand and support the strategic imperative to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and feel supported and valued. However, some rooms are cramped and too small for the numbers of learners enrolled.
- The self-assessment report is detailed and comprehensive. It identifies strengths and areas where performance could be improved accurately. The quality improvement plan contains realistic actions that are likely to lead to the identified improvements.

What does Lewisham College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that learner progress reviews focus sufficiently on attendance and retention so that more learners remain on the course and achieve their learning aims.
- Review room allocations so that teaching rooms are sufficiently spacious to allow a range of teaching and learning strategies to be employed.
- Identify the outstanding elements of the department's lesson planning and disseminate these in a cross-college forum.

Foundation learning

Grade 2

Context

32. Currently 213 learners are enrolled on full and part-time foundation programmes for learners with moderate to severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of learners are adults. In addition, 68 learners aged 14 to 16 attend part time. The learners are from a diverse range of backgrounds and ethnic heritages. Learners gain a range of external qualifications.

Key findings

- Learners make good progress and achieve high standards. Success rates are consistently high except for a small number of learners on an entry-level construction course. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners make good progress in lessons. Rates of progression to community projects, further education, and supported employment or supported living are high.
- Learners develop skills in independent working across a range of vocational areas including floristry, horticulture, and performing arts. They develop the knowledge and understanding they need to improve their social and economic well-being through work-related enterprise initiatives. For example, working with concentration, accuracy and skill, learners design and make greetings cards to a high commercial standard.
- Learners develop a good understanding of the strategies they need to employ to manage their own behaviour and maintain both a healthy lifestyle and good mental health. Learners enjoy their learning within the safe college environment. However, the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills is weak.
- Teaching and learning are good. In most courses, programme and lesson plans are detailed, with succinct and clear learning and skills-based targets for every learner, and a good range of learning activities to promote active learning. In horticulture, specific learning targets ensure progress and development in planting and maintenance, and in money management skills when pricing plants.
- Teachers manage groups of learners with diverse behavioural needs well. In discussions learners' contributions are valued. Teachers create a positive learning atmosphere in lessons, increasing learners' confidence well. In better lessons teachers give good reinforcement of key learning points; for example, rehearsing 'saying no' to strangers in a variety of everyday contexts. In weaker lessons opportunities to stretch and challenge learners, particularly in literacy and numeracy, are sometimes missed.
- In many lesson, information and learning technology (ILT) resources, to support the development of learners' literacy and numeracy and give them access to on-line learning materials, are insufficient. Learners' work and achievements are celebrated through attractive wall displays in every classroom and learners' art work is of a high standard.

- The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are good overall. However, the monitoring of progress in learners' literacy and numeracy is very weak. The results of initial and diagnostic assessment are not used effectively to set clear targets to be taught and achieved by learners in lessons. Insufficient attention is given to building on existing skills and developing and improving learners' standards in literacy and numeracy.
- Excellent enterprise programmes are in place. Learners run their own floristry company and enterprise initiatives are also in place in card design, car valeting and horticulture. 'Pathways to Employment' courses prepare learners very well for the world of work and the strong focus on travel training improves learners' independence.
- Partnership working is good. A strong focus on performing arts has led to good opportunities for learners to further develop their talents in community-based arts and drama or to progress to intermediate courses within the college. Transition arrangements with special schools are effective.
- Learners receive good support from learning assistants and independent learning is actively promoted in lessons. Liaison between teachers and support workers is very good, focusing well on the attainment of learners. However, some learners with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) dominant behaviour would benefit from further specialist classroom-based support.
- Curriculum management is good. Re-structuring of support staff, including roles and responsibilities and the appointment of a team leader, has resulted in improved communications between staff and the development of well-targeted staff training. The observation of teaching and learning and internal inspection are rigorous. New accommodation is in place including a creative arts space.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Self-assessment results in clear actions to improve. However the reporting and recording of qualifications on the self-assessment report is poor. Success rates are ascribed to courses rather than qualifications and current records do not allow the appropriate management of qualification data.

What does Lewisham College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the results of initial and diagnostic assessment are used effectively to set clear targets to be taught and achieved by learners in developing and improving their literacy and numeracy.
- Improve access to ILT resources for learners in lessons, to support the development of learners' written and numerical skills and give learners access to on-line learning materials.
- Consolidate the new developments in the management of support staff, including the maintenance of improved communication channels, and improve specialist support for learners with ADHD dominant behaviour.
- Improve the recording of qualification data on management information systems to inform self-assessment accurately.

Information about the inspection

33. Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the college's assistant principal (quality and improvement), as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding bodies, the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
34. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Lewisham College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	4,913	76	2,151	2,686	
Part-time learners	5,564	306	34	1,342	3,882
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3				
Outcomes for learners	3	3	4	3	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do learners progress?	3				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
Quality of provision	3	3	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3				
Leadership and management	3	3	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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