Learning and Skills inspection report

Date published: 07 November 2012 Inspection Number: 404168

URN: 108393



# Sir George Monoux College

# Sixth form college

Inspection dates		2-5 October 2012		
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2		
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3		
Outcomes for learners		Good-2		
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2		
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2		

#### **Summary of key findings for learners**

#### This provider is good because:

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes for learners and the effectiveness of leadership and management are all good. Most learners attain their learning goals and many make good or better progress.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well and the college provides a harmonious and purposeful environment for learning. A high proportion of students from almost all groups achieve successful outcomes.
- Students are well prepared for progression to higher learning or employment.
- Governors, leaders and managers have shaped an ambitious vision to provide very good education. They have created an aspirational environment which has led to considerably improved performance.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment does not ensure that students of all abilities make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- A minority of lessons are not tailored well enough to meet the needs of individual students.
- Some lessons lack sufficient pace, challenge and appropriate questioning techniques to stimulate and check learning most effectively.
- Students' skills in English and mathematics are not always developed well enough in lessons.
- The analysis of teaching in curriculum areas does not result in plans for improvement which focus sufficiently on improving lessons.

#### **Full report**

#### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the good quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that questioning techniques always test learning effectively, develop learning rigorously and facilitate the deeper probing of subjects. Ensure that the learning of all students is checked fully in lessons and that questioning techniques do not allow a minority of students to provide all of the responses to questions. Target and compose questions skilfully so that students' learning and thinking skills and their ability to analyse topics critically are better developed.
- Ensure that planning for lessons is always thorough so that strategies for learning meet the needs of individual students fully and provide appropriate levels of pace and challenge. Share good practice in teaching, learning and assessment effectively between teachers so that all lessons are at least good.
- Accelerate students' progress by avoiding overly long teacher expositions and ensuring that students are fully involved in lessons. Integrate opportunities for students to participate actively throughout lessons by using a range of strategies to stimulate their thinking, involvement and contribution from an early stage.
- Promote the development of specialist vocabulary, English and mathematics appropriately so that it is good in all lessons. Raise the proportion of students gaining functional skills qualifications or high grades in GCSE mathematics and English.
- Ensure that planning to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is clear and robust at curriculum level. Ensure that strengths and areas for improvement in lessons are analysed thoroughly in subject areas and that planning for improvement is stronger at that level.

#### **Inspection judgements**

#### **Outcomes for learners**

- The proportion of students who completed their courses successfully in 2011/12 was high and has improved considerably over the last three years. Students made expected progress at A level in 2011/12 but their progress at AS level continued to be good and it was exceptional in some subjects.
- The progress made by students in 2011/12 was in line with predictions based on their prior attainment at GCSE, which for many students is below average. Many students now make good progress in lessons and some make outstanding progress.
- The proportion of students who successfully completed their courses was high in the majority of subject areas in 2011/12, but it was low in one subject. The proportion of students successfully achieving AS/A level qualifications and vocational qualifications is high.
- A very high proportion of students are of minority ethnic heritage. Almost all minority ethnic groups of students achieve their qualifications successfully, but a very small number of groups were not sufficiently successful in 2011/12. The achievement gap between male and female students has closed completely and both genders are equally successful.
- A high proportion of students who receive additional learning support complete their qualifications successfully.
- High-grade pass rates at GCSE are low and a low proportion of students successfully complete functional skills. However, many students achieve adult literacy qualifications. Students develop good English skills in many lessons, although this is an area for improvement in information and communication technology and visual arts courses.

- Students are generally punctual to lessons, but their average attendance rates are low in a few subject areas.
- Students work to a standard that meets or exceeds the requirements of their qualification aims. They develop good skills which are useful for their progression to higher education or employment, such as critical analysis, independent learning skills, team working, problem solving and making presentations. Students' skilful and frequent use of technology and the virtual learning environment enhances their learning and progress.
- Students have a good understanding of cultural diversity and their personal and social skills are very well developed. Different cultures are celebrated frequently during lively and engaging events at college, such as Nigerian Independence Day. Student displays include fashions, music and dancing to highlight the rich diversity of heritage within the college community.
- Many students progress from intermediate to advanced level courses. A high proportion of students continue to university or employment at the end of their course.
- Students enjoy being treated as adults and being given opportunities to take on particular responsibilities in college activities. This prepares them well for their next steps into higher education or employment.

#### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Teachers are enthusiastic and hold high expectations of their students. They provide extensive support and encouragement, for example in organising workshops for students not making required progress, or to encourage and enable high-performing students to achieve even better.
- In the stronger lessons teachers plan well a good range of interesting and relevant tasks that focus precisely on what students should learn. They provide appropriate challenge to the more able students, based on their current performance and prior attainment, and effective support for those who are performing less well. Examples include more able students carrying out more challenging tasks, leading group discussion and being required to answer more difficult verbal questions that develop skills of application and evaluation.
- Teachers assess carefully and systematically students' learning and progress through a variety of methods including case studies, quizzes and the use of mini-whiteboards. In the best examples, teachers extend students' learning successfully by challenging their thinking and requiring them to explain and justify their answers. They encourage discussion and enable students to apply their knowledge to relevant, real-life situations.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not make sufficient use of detailed information on students' prior attainment to plan effectively to meet the needs of all students in the class. In these weaker lessons, teachers' questioning is too frequently undirected at individual students, allowing the more able or confident students to showcase their knowledge and skills, but resulting in others not being tested or not contributing sufficiently to discussion or other activities.
- Students are rightly appreciative of the quality of teachers' written and verbal feedback, and they receive constructive advice on how to improve their work. Teachers and tutors monitor their progress systematically, so that students know how well they are progressing. However, not all target setting is yet of a consistently high standard in individual learning plans to ensure precise measurement of students' progress.
- Inspectors saw many good examples of teachers' planning to develop students' skills and knowledge in English and mathematics. Students appreciate the benefits of these in enabling them to achieve higher grades in their written work and to achieve their career aims, for example in writing convincing personal statements as part of applications for places in higher education.
- College managers have strengthened arrangements to provide initial advice and guidance for prospective students from local schools, ensuring in particular that they have extensive introductions to subjects that they will not have previously studied at GCSE level, such as

psychology or sociology. In addition, staff are very mindful of students' educational and career progression, including progression to prestigious universities, in advising students on their choice of subjects to form a coherent programme of learning. The broadening of the college curriculum to include a wider range of vocational courses has enabled students to make a more informed and flexible choice of subjects based on their prior attainment, aptitude and aspiration.

- Support for learners is effective in helping students to achieve. Students are very enthusiastic about 'Study plus' which provides a popular, flexible and welcoming 'one-stop shop' for students' support needs in English and mathematics. It supports students for whom English is an additional language, and for those students who may have fallen behind in their learning or who aspire to achieve better. More developed arrangements with local schools enable earlier identification of students' support needs and more timely provision of specialist support, reflected in students' improved achievements.
- Teachers provide a high level of insightful reflection into the improvement of their professional practice as a result of well-developed arrangements to improve the quality of teaching and learning and their increased expectations of learners since the last inspection. These arrangements meet the needs of individual teachers well and have contributed significantly to the improvement of teaching and learning since the last inspection, when they were satisfactory.
- Students learn in a harmonious atmosphere of mutual respect. Teachers ensure that learning materials take account of cultural and ethnic diversity, reflecting the diversity of the student body.

## ICT for practitioners

Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in the high standard of students' work and outcomes. Students make good progress and many achieve high grades. Students' attendance in lessons is good.
- The pace of learning is brisk and appropriately challenging in many lessons. Teaching enables students to extend their knowledge and skills very effectively. They manipulate a wide range of software with confidence and have a good understanding of the theory relating to the software.
- Teachers are well qualified and have up-to-date subject knowledge about new computer technologies and software which they draw on well in teaching and learning. Teachers take full advantage of good quality training to develop skills that meet their individual needs and the requirements of the curriculum.
- The assessment of completed work on vocational courses is particularly good. Students receive detailed feedback on continuous assessments, and understand what they need to do to improve. The standard of students' work is good and the students develop good personal, social and employability skills.
- Students develop very well in lessons the broader skills of teamwork, problem solving, negotiation and independent learning. Students develop good understanding of the practical application of information and communication technology in industry during visits to businesses and through the use of well-considered case studies.
- Students value the good academic and personal support they receive from tutors and specialist staff across the college. They benefit from the effective initial assessment of their skills and target setting that supports the achievement of their academic and personal objectives. Students receive good advice and guidance at college, including through the support centre which also provides guidance on English and mathematics.

- Pre-course leaflets and information provided to students are good and enable students to make informed choices about their courses and careers. Induction explains course requirements and expectations very clearly.
- In the small number of weaker lessons, teachers talk too much, causing students to lose interest. Questioning is sometimes weak and fails to test learning effectively. In these lessons, teachers do not target students individually and only a few students volunteer answers.
- Many students make slow progress in developing programming skills. Most students do not have prior knowledge of programming and find it difficult to develop the necessary skills. Classroombased resources are good, but there are not enough resources on the virtual learning environment for students to practise programming outside of lessons.
- Students' skills in English and mathematics are underdeveloped on vocational courses. Teachers do not routinely plan for the development of these skills in lessons. Students make extensive use of software facilities, such as spelling and grammar checks, which masks some of their language weaknesses.
- Teaching and learning incorporate well-planned celebration and promotion of equality and diversity. Well-designed learning materials reflect equality and diversity very broadly. Students are respectful of each other and work well together. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not use the findings from the initial assessment of students' skills sufficiently well to ensure that the learning needs of all students are met. In these lessons all students do the same activity at the same time, which fails to stretch the more able.

# Visual arts, media and communication Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in high rates of achievement, particularly in media. Students enjoy their work and generally make good progress, including in the development of their personal and social skills, and they produce work of a very good standard, particularly in media. A high proportion of students progress to higher education.
- Many teachers support students well, have high expectations of them in lessons and set lively, interesting assignments. Students develop good skills, but lessons are not always sufficiently demanding for more capable students. Students produce sophisticated film posters and short films; their photography work is imaginative with good written work, but the development of students' visual language skills on art and design vocational courses requires improvement.
- Students' skills are effectively tested at the beginning of their course through good initial assessment. Teachers note students' profiles but do not always use these effectively to plan teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of more able students. The majority of lessons are planned imaginatively, are appropriately challenging for almost all students and engage them productively throughout.
- Excellent lesson workbooks, gapped handouts and video clips are used well to support learning. In media, for example, an ambitious lesson required students to explain key concepts to peers. Teachers use directed questioning well to engage students at the start of lessons and to check their learning; however, they do not often use questioning to elicit deeper understanding.
- A few lessons lack sufficient pace and students lose interest once they have completed their tasks. Schemes of work are not always used well to identify clear learning outcomes or good learning activities. In weaker lessons, students are not sufficiently involved in learning activities; teachers often talk too much and they do not check learning well enough.
- Good partnerships enable commercial and community contexts to be integrated into assignments. This strengthens students' understanding of the commercial environment. For

example, a city charity set an exciting architectural brief for students to design a pop-up structure.

- Students receive good verbal and written feedback from teachers which enables them to improve their work systematically. Final feedback to students on their assignments is good and summarizes students' key strengths and areas for future development. Students receive good support in tutorials and individual learning plans identify clearly the areas students need to develop; however, target setting is not sufficiently specific.
- Students' English skills are developed well in practical and theory lessons. Students improve their communication skills in a number of ways, for example paragraph construction and evaluative writing were prominent features of an art lesson, and in a contextual studies lesson students highlighted and selected key points in a peer's text. Students use the virtual learning site frequently to obtain course materials, revise for exams and submit work online.
- Advice and guidance are good and students are placed on appropriate courses. Additional workshops enable students to consolidate learning and improve their work. Students take part in a wide range of interesting activities that enrich their learning.
- Equality and diversity are integrated very effectively into the curriculum. Students draw on their diverse family backgrounds and individual heritage well in projects. For example in film studies, world cinema, urban film, and women film makers are integrated into assignments very effectively.

#### **Humanities and social sciences**

Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding; students make outstanding progress; together, these lead to outstanding success rates in almost all subjects. Students produce much work of a very high standard and have impressive analytical and critical skills, which enable very many of them to progress to universities. Students enjoy their learning greatly and develop very good personal and social skills, as well as good employment-related attributes, which help them in their careers.
- Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subjects, use innovative teaching methods and they inspire students to achieve highly. Teachers have high aspirations and standards which challenge students to realise their full potential. Students respond to this culture of high expectations very positively by working diligently and by supporting each other well and with respect.
- Teachers identify the individual learning needs of students well. They plan their lessons with very good resources, so that students experience a wide range of learning activities which suit their individual needs. Almost all lessons are brisk, purposeful and sharply focused on achievable outcomes; some small group work occasionally lacks clarity and sufficient challenge for all individuals. Students participate actively in lessons and develop their understanding of subject matter very effectively, as well as honing their skills at interacting with others.
- Teachers use a wide variety of methods to check students' learning in lessons, including very effective peer assessment in economics, psychology and sociology. Teachers ask questions frequently and encourage and value all students' contributions, but miss opportunities occasionally to probe students' deeper understanding by not always using sufficiently challenging questioning. Students receive very timely, detailed and constructive written comments on their assignments, which are highly effective in motivating and helping them to improve.
- Academic and pastoral support for students is wide ranging and very helpful. Students recognise
  that they receive excellent advice and guidance from teachers and tutors, which is

complemented by the college's homework club, visiting experts on examinations, subject specialist revision sessions in economics, geography and sociology, and other initiatives. Students agree clear and appropriate personal targets with tutors in their individual learning plans, as well as additional subject-related goals with teachers. All such targets are reviewed regularly.

- Students develop good English and mathematical skills in lessons. Subject teachers integrate literacy and numeracy into curriculum planning and lessons very well. Discussion of grammar and terminology is thorough in all subjects, students' written work is corrected meticulously, and detailed analysis of graphs, pie charts and tables takes place often in geography, economics, sociology and psychology.
- Teaching and learning demonstrate very good promotion of equality and diversity and teachers promote a very strong ethos of inclusivity in which individuals are treated sensitively. Specific recent initiatives include the introduction of an A-level history unit on the First Crusade, which promotes better understanding among different religious groups in lessons. Successful changes in teaching methods have improved the achievement of previously underperforming male students in sociology. Students benefit from visits and talks from role models in the local and wider communities.

# **Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+**Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and are strongly linked to students' good outcomes and success rates. Previously students made the progress expected based on their prior attainment at GCSE, but many AS/A level students are now making good progress in lessons. Students have well developed personal and social skills, work confidently as part of a team or independently, and very many progress to university.
- In many lessons teachers set challenging tasks and they make learning relevant to students' lives by relating themes from language and literature to current events. Students develop independent learning and problem-solving skills through well-managed group tasks. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm for their subject engages and motivates students to develop skills well, including the development of good analytical skills.
- In the small number of weaker lessons, tasks and activities are insufficiently challenging for more able students during group work or when students work together in plenary activities. Students' individual learning needs are not met sufficiently well and opportunities are missed to accelerate the learning of higher ability students in those lessons.
- Planning documentation for lessons is sparse. Learning outcomes and teaching and learning strategies are underdeveloped in schemes of work and this undermines good structuring and management in weaker lessons.
- Initial assessment is effective in identifying students' individual learning needs at an early stage of their course. Advanced level students strengthen their intermediate level English skills very effectively in lessons and as part of their wider curriculum. Students studying GCSEs over two years make very good progress at improving their literacy skills.
- Students make frequent and very effective use of the virtual learning environment which helps them to extend their learning and research.
- Teachers assess learning very effectively in many lessons. Many teachers make good use of questioning to check students' understanding and they monitor how well students undertake tasks in order to evaluate their progress. Verbal feedback to students in lessons is almost always good, as is the more formal written feedback students receive regularly. These contribute significantly to students' better progress.

- Students are not involved sufficiently throughout a few lessons. This is because teachers' expositions and explanations are too long and their assessment of students' learning is not effective enough. In such lessons, teachers ask students few questions, individually, or questions are answered by a small number of students only. Students' individual learning plans are generally sound but they do not always have enough focus on setting aspirational targets. Students do not always have a clear enough understanding of what they need to do to achieve their full potential.
- Support for students, including advice and guidance, are good. Teachers support individuals well and students support each other very effectively when solving problems in lessons in order to ensure that weaker students make good progress. Students feel well supported by their subject teachers; they receive support on a regular basis and many students make good use of the college's support centre.
- Many lessons show good, active promotion of equality and diversity. In one literature lesson, for example, the social and moral imperative of challenging discrimination was considered through exploring the impact of doing nothing. Gender issues are also explored thoroughly and stereotypes are challenged strongly.

#### The effectiveness of leadership and management

- Leaders and managers have shaped an ambitious vision for the future, drawing on extensive consultation with staff, students, parents and governors. The college's mission, to provide high quality education with the power to change lives, is underpinned by shared, appropriate values. An impressive strategic plan clearly articulates expectations of staff, fundamental themes, aims and specific targets.
- Managers raise students' aspirations. They achieve this through a well-structured programme for gifted and talented students, mentoring, and focused preparation for interviews at more selective universities and for more competitive courses, such as medicine. Governors set a target for the number of students gaining places at Russell Group universities.
- Governors know the college well. They are closely involved in shaping its ethos, in self-assessment and monitoring progress towards achieving its goals. A comprehensive set of key performance indicators provides a clear overview, allowing governors to offer robust challenge and support.
- Performance indicators for managers sharpen accountability. Arrangements for performance management focus attention where it is needed most and there are clear links between lesson observations, examination results and the planning of professional development; this results in focused targets for improvement. Staff training is effective and plentiful and much of it focuses on improving teachers' skills in the classroom.
- Self-assessment is broadly accurate; judgements are challenged robustly in curriculum, quality and resources review meetings, involving the Principal and governors. The quality improvement plan is clearly structured and its implementation is monitored closely, but some key areas for improvement identified in self-assessment are not delineated clearly enough. The improvement plan is sometimes not sufficiently specific about how objectives are to be achieved.
- A wide range of effective strategies improves teaching. Advanced practitioners provide good support to individuals and teams; a variety of forms of lesson observation, supplemented by teaching and learning surgeries, have had a tangible impact. Nevertheless, the analysis of teaching and learning is underdeveloped in curriculum self-assessment reports; as a result, plans for improvement at subject level do not focus sufficiently on improving lessons.
- Areas causing concern are tackled swiftly and decisively, and consequently teaching, learning and assessment and student achievement have improved considerably. There are effective arrangements for sharing good practice in team meetings and weekly briefings. The college has a strong capacity for sustained improvement.

- The college makes particularly good use of students' views to plan and review its work. A student-led conference developed an impressive 'honour code' of behaviour, student achievement and learning teams provide course leaders with their evaluation of classroom practice at each course meeting and students' views are incorporated well into self-assessment. The college shares with students what it has done as a result of their suggestions and students feel that their views are listened to and acted upon at college.
- The college's curriculum meets the needs and interests of its students and local community. The range of courses provides appropriate opportunities for progression within college and beyond; the chance to follow vocational or academic courses, or a combination of both, provides choice and opportunity. The college requires students to gain appropriate qualifications in mathematics and English and the development of employability skills is increasingly systematic through the academy of enterprise and entrepreneurship, the finance academy, work experience and the tutorial programme.
- The college's approach to equality and diversity is good. It energetically promotes equality through a vibrant celebration of diversity; it tackles rare incidents of bullying decisively. The college supports those with learning difficulties and disabilities well, integrating them fully into college life. Training for staff and governors is effective and the college raises students' awareness through their handbook, workshops and guest speakers.
- Equality policies and objectives are derived from appropriate consultation, analyses of data and assessment of the impact of the college's work. The college has successfully remedied the underachievement of Black Caribbean boys and the achievement gap between males and females; further work is needed to tackle underachievement by mixed race students. The composition of the board does not reflect the college community in respect of gender or race, and the college has done too little to rectify this.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Arrangements are supported by regularly-reviewed policies, appropriate training and effective cooperation with a wide range of agencies. Employment checks are appropriate and the management of health and safety is effective. Campus officers contribute significantly to the feeling of safety and security in the college community.

# **Record of Main Findings (RMF)**

# **Sir George Monoux College**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2 2		

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	
ICT for practitioners	2
Visual Arts	2
Media and communication	2
Humanities	1
Social Sciences	1
English	2

### **Provider details**

Sir George Monoux College		
Type of provider	Sixth form college	
Age range of learners	16-18	
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 2,013	
	Part-time: 0	
Principal/CEO	Mr P Ramella	
Date of previous inspection	December 2009	
Website address	www.george-monoux.ac.uk	

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or Level 2 below		Level 3		Level 4 and above			
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time			275		1,740	31		
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							

#### **Additional socio-economic information**

Sir George Monoux College is situated in Waltham Forest, North East London. Many of its students live in areas of significant social and economic deprivation. Unemployment is much higher in Walthamstow, at 9.6%, than the average for London or the national rate of 5.3%. Students of minority ethnic heritage make up 94% of the student population, which is a much higher proportion than the 42% of people from minority ethnic heritage locally. The proportion of students gaining at least five GCSEs at grades A\* to C in Waltham Forest is consistently lower than the national average. Most local businesses are small or medium-sized enterprises.

#### Information about this inspection

#### **Lead inspector**

Gloria Dolan HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the Associate Vice Principal Quality and Data as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed lessons, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the college. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012

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