

Longley Park

Sixth form college

Inspection dates		12–15 March 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This college requires improvement because:

- Students' achievement and their rate of progress vary far too much and too many do not achieve as well as they should, particularly on AS-level courses.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good enough and do not enthuse or challenge all students to achieve their best.
- The setting and monitoring of students' academic targets are inconsistent.
- The performance management of teachers and managers is insufficiently robust, although this is improving.
- While there has been some recent success and a few curriculum areas have shown rapid improvement, the Principal and senior managers recognise that much more needs to be done to raise standards for all students.

This college has the following strengths:

- This is a highly inclusive and harmonious college where students from very diverse backgrounds get on well together.
- The curriculum is good and combines vocational and academic pathways very effectively.
- Students' progression between different levels of courses is very good and progression to higher education is good; it is excellent for students who began their studies at foundation level.
- A strongly committed senior leadership team who are enthused by their mission to widen participation in the local area.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Develop further, and more quickly, the sharing of best practice within and across curriculum areas to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment and to ensure that all teaching is at least good. Evaluate fully the impact of actions implemented recently. Use this evaluation to inform actions that target subjects where more rapid improvements in success rates are required and ensure that all students benefit from high quality lessons that enable them to make rapid progress and achieve their potential.
- Ensure that all teachers have high expectations of students. Support teachers to set realistic but challenging targets that motivate students. Monitor closely students' progress towards their targets and continue to take swift action when students who they are responsible for are at risk of underachieving.
- Monitor rigorously the implementation of the college's strategy to ensure a more consistent approach to improving students' English and mathematical skills. Develop teachers' skills and confidence to enable them to provide better support for students who need to improve their literacy and/or numeracy skills. Ensure that written feedback is specific and constructive so that students know where they have gone wrong and what they need to do to improve.
- Develop a more robust strategy for both additional learning support and subject support, including workshops, to ensure that more students, especially those identified as needing greater help, take advantage of the extra support offered to help them achieve as well as they should.
- Strengthen the arrangements for performance management to ensure that all teachers and managers are accountable for specific targets linked to outcomes for the students they teach. Ensure that managers use and evaluate a range of data accurately, including outcomes of lesson observations, success rates and value-added data, to inform performance management of all staff and to set realistic and challenging targets for improvement that are linked to strategic objectives.
- Strengthen quality assurance arrangements. Ensure that all college processes, such as lesson observation, target-setting, marking and assessment are all completed to a high standard. Increase the rigour and evaluative nature of self-assessment and the targeted use of data, especially at course level, so that it is used to inform targeted actions for improvement.
- Improve the capacity of governors to hold leaders to account and evaluate the quality of provision.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Success rates on long courses have improved since the last inspection although they remain below the national average for similar colleges. This masks significant variation in outcomes within curriculum areas, across the college and between different types of qualification. ▪ The vast majority of students take advanced-level courses, and a high proportion of them combine vocational and academic qualifications successfully. Students generally perform better on advanced-vocational courses where overall achievement is around the average for similar colleges, although this masks some very high performance in a few subjects. Achievement on GCE A-level courses is mostly satisfactory. At AS level, the number of students who achieve their qualifications successfully is too low. ▪ Success rates in health and social care improved in 2011/12 and are now high. Students' achievement on courses in business is also high, and sometimes very high. However, in other 	

subjects, including in information technology, computing, sport and travel and tourism, far too many students leave without achieving their qualifications.

- Results in functional skills require improvement. Students' achievement at foundation level in mathematics is low. The proportion of students gaining a grade A* to C in GCSE mathematics is around average. Results in functional skills in English are high, but the proportion of high grades of A* to C in GCSE English was low in 2011/12.
- Value-added data indicate that too many students on A-level courses do not make the progress expected of them based on their prior attainment before coming to the college. This has been the case for several subjects in the last two years. Students at AS level who remain on their courses make satisfactory progress. The majority of students on BTEC courses make at least good progress. Students in art and design make consistently excellent progress.
- The progression rate between different levels of study is high; almost 70% of students completing their courses at foundation level move onto intermediate-level programmes, and over three quarters of students move from intermediate to advanced-level study. Progression to higher education is good, and excellent for many students who began their studies at foundation level.
- Students from most minority-ethnic groups performed better than the college average in 2011/12 but in the same year students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities did not perform as well as their peers. The college works hard to close achievement gaps, including between males and females, and in this it is successful. However, the gaps in performance between different levels of qualifications and between different subjects remain too wide, especially on advanced-level courses.
- Students enjoy coming to college and their attendance is good and sometimes very good in an increasing number of subjects. Punctuality, by contrast, is poor and often hinders learning because valuable lesson time is wasted while teachers deal with latecomers. Students feel safe and value the highly inclusive and welcoming college environment. Their behaviour in and out of lessons is good.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. There is too much variability in the quality of learning in curriculum areas and across the college and this is reflected in outcomes for students. Examples of good and better practice can be found but a significant number of lessons require improvement.
- Teachers are very supportive of their students and in the better lessons they have high expectations and use their subject knowledge well to engage students in learning. Questions are used effectively to check knowledge and understanding. Students enjoy their learning and develop an inquiring approach. For example, in order to explore the technique of layering in art, a student successfully integrated photographs and paintings of friends by experimenting with ink dissolving in water.
- In less-effective lessons teachers fail to take account of the starting points of students when planning lessons. Students complete the same task irrespective of their ability and the more-able students are not challenged sufficiently. Students' involvement in their learning is reduced when teachers talk too much or when activities lack sufficient challenge. Teachers often use undirected questioning and allow a few students to dominate, leaving other students too passively involved in their learning.
- An increasing number of students use the college's virtual learning environment for independent study. Information learning technology is used imaginatively in a few subject areas. For example, sports students demonstrate the skills involved in forehand table tennis and at the same time explain the technique while being filmed on camera. This is then watched and used for assessment by students and teachers. However, the use of interactive features of information learning technology to support learning is underdeveloped in most lessons.

- Staff provide effective additional learning support both in and out of class for those students who actively seek help. There are many good examples of how this support has increased the self-esteem and independence of students. For example, one student who speaks English as an additional language has developed the required skills and confidence to pursue a degree in stunt performance at university. However, the college knows that further work is required to ensure that all students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend support sessions to help them achieve as well as all other students.
- Students who use subject support sessions find them beneficial. They value highly the individual personal support provided by teachers and staff through mentoring, drop-in workshops, individual support sessions, breakfast clubs, and holiday and weekend sessions. However, insufficient numbers of students take advantage of the support available and the college does not direct students sufficiently to attend the most appropriate sessions.
- Students and staff use the new electronic monitoring system confidently and this has increased the effectiveness of identifying students who are at risk of not making the progress expected of them. Prompt actions by most teachers mean that more students in the current year are staying to achieve their qualifications. However, teachers set insufficiently challenging targets to motivate students to achieve their best. The quality of progress reviews between teachers and students is inconsistent.
- Assessment of students' work is satisfactory but the quality of written feedback is inconsistent. Many teachers provide specific, constructive feedback which explains what has been done well and what students need to do to improve. However, marking is often insufficiently detailed to be helpful.
- The college places a high priority on the development of students' English skills. High-quality displays are evident in classrooms and around the college and these help to raise students' awareness of the importance of English. Most teachers encourage students to use subject-specific terminology at every opportunity. However, the approach to correcting spelling and punctuation in students' written work is patchy and many teachers still miss opportunities to develop English skills in the classroom. The implementation of the strategy to develop students' mathematical skills is recent and it is too soon to judge the impact of this.
- Students receive appropriate help and advice at the start of their courses and timely initial advice and guidance enable most students to make informed choices. Guidance for students planning to progress to employment or higher education is good. Students with specific learning needs benefit from good transition arrangements prior to enrolment and these ensure that support is in place at the start of their course.
- Many students enjoy the many opportunities they have for enrichment, trips and visits. For example, students have recently visited 'ICT live' at Disneyland, Paris, and media and photography students have made a cultural visit to New York. Sports students continue to support a fitness class for people aged 50 and above.
- Students find the college friendly, welcoming and inclusive. They work well together to explore a range of issues. For example, students looked at the way that graphics and photographs influenced recent revolutions in the Middle East, and used English literature texts to interrogate issues such as gender, mental illness, cultural and religious identity. However, the promotion of equality and diversity is insufficient in most lessons.

**Science and mathematics
Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+**

Requires improvement

- The standard of teaching, learning and assessment is varied and requires improvement. This picture is reflected in students' outcomes which vary between subjects and different qualifications. Success rates on BTEC vocational courses are at or above national averages. On academic courses success rates are mostly below national averages. Success rates in AS

subjects are particularly low. Students taking BTEC advanced-level courses gain good study skills and many science students develop good practical skills.

- The better lessons are planned well to include a good range of activities to meet the needs of students with different abilities and, as a result, all students are involved and motivated. For example, in one lesson students successfully completed a 'circus' of chemical experiments involving the analysis of chemical compounds. For each experiment they had to explain the chemical reaction and used cleverly-designed flash cards to assist them in the balancing of equations. The students were enthusiastic about the activity and enjoyed the challenge.
- In the weaker lessons the pace is poor and there is a lack of challenge. For example, one activity, such as a test or quiz, occasionally takes a whole or large part of a lesson and students' attention wanes. Punctuality is poor and teachers' expectations of students are too low, for example, allowing them to eat and drink rather than focus on their work.
- The department has worked hard to improve assessment; it is now good, and this is having a positive impact on current students' achievement. Students are assessed more regularly in lessons through quick tests and quizzes, frequent homework assignments and practice examinations. Homework policy has been revised and is now standardised in each subject area. Written feedback is detailed and shows clearly what students have to do to reach the next step.
- Teachers give freely of their time and offer workshops to support students who need extra help. Students who attend the workshops value highly the extra help given to them by their teachers. However, too many students who would benefit from this help choose not to attend and the department has yet to rectify this issue.
- Students' English skills are developed effectively. For example, in a physics lesson on nuclear energy, students were given news articles about the Japanese nuclear disaster to read. They highlighted key scientific words and then explained them to the rest of the class. The students found this both challenging and enlightening and enjoyed learning from each other.
- Students combine vocational and academic study very successfully. Progression is good. An increasing number of students progress to apprenticeships and into employment. A very high proportion of students taking advanced-level BTEC courses gain places at prestigious universities, many of them to read pharmacy, biomedical science and other medically-related degrees. Progression from foundation-level functional skills to GCSE mathematics is also good.
- Equality and diversity are insufficiently promoted in lessons. However, an 'all-female' astronomy club has been set up in order to attract women into physics and this is well attended.

Social sciences and humanities
Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, which is reflected in the outcomes for students. In 2011/12 success rates were high in A-level economics, psychology and religious studies, but they were low in AS geography, history, philosophy, politics and sociology. Actions have been taken to improve outcomes. Except in sociology, the recent module results are better than last year and the progress of current learners on these courses is improving and often good. The college is tackling the weaknesses in sociology.
- Learners are attentive in their lessons. Attendance and behaviour are good, but punctuality requires improvement. The standard of students' work is variable as is the amount they are asked to do, both in and out of lessons. In the better lessons progress is good, for example, in an AS philosophy lesson students planning an essay to discuss the statement 'evil exists so God doesn't' showed sophisticated skills in assessing and evaluating material.
- In the weaker lessons the expectations of teachers are too low and the pace of the lesson is slow. Learners enjoy these lessons, but the amount of learning they achieve is insufficient for them to make the progress of which they are capable.

- Support for those learners who seek it out is very good. Most teachers put on workshops and support sessions in lunchtimes, after college and during weekends and holidays. However, procedures to ensure all students who would benefit from this support receive it have been insufficiently robust. Arrangements have now improved. They are particularly effective in psychology.
- Students are motivated by teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects and respond well to this. In a politics lesson students discussed fluently the difference between bio-centric equality and anthropocentric equality and applied this to the recent proposals to cull both deer and badgers. In a history lesson the teacher's enthusiasm for Salisbury's foreign policy and the extent to which the second Boer war was the result of official government policy captivated students' interest and resulted in lively discussion.
- In the better lessons students are clear what they are expected to learn and teachers plan how this learning will be assessed, usually with a variety of methods. However, in too many lessons, methods of assessment are narrow and do not adequately stretch the more able or give sufficient attention to those who need additional help and support. Too often tasks are given to the whole class which may be too easy for some or too difficult for others.
- The use of appropriate terminology and subject-specific vocabulary is developed effectively in many lessons. Teachers encourage the correct use of language and correct it sensitively where necessary. For example, a politics student who defined utopia as 'peace and everything' was encouraged to appreciate that another student's definition of 'a perfect society' was more appropriate. However, the development of more general English language skills in both written and oral work is given less focus.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is not sufficiently planned either in lesson plans or schemes of work. Teachers respond to students' misconceptions or stereotypical ideas as they arise, but not enough consideration is given beforehand to opportunities presented by the subject and to plan for this.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Staff and governors in the college are enthused by their mission to widen participation and to raise aspirations in the local area. After a period of steady growth, student numbers have dropped in the last year, partly due to the falling numbers of 16-year-olds in the wider area and the greater range of post-16 places available elsewhere. The college recognises the need to respond to this and has taken steps to strengthen its partnership with the local schools it serves.
- The governing body has been more effective at monitoring the college's finances than student achievement. Governors are very supportive of the college's ambition to serve its local community. They are aware that outcomes require improvement but have not yet been able to take sufficient action to secure that improvement. Governors are keen to offer challenge to the senior team but evidence is not always recorded in the minutes of their meetings.
- Self-assessment is insufficiently rigorous. Although in most cases it incorporates significant data, they are not used to make robust evaluative judgments, nor are they always used to inform or target areas where improvements are most needed. The college self-assessment report is overly descriptive. Sector norms are sometimes identified as strengths, and areas for improvement are often missed.
- To date, quality improvement measures have had limited impact on some underperforming areas, although successful interventions have raised standards in others. Senior managers recognise that underperformance in the past has not been remedied quickly enough and have begun to accelerate the pace by revising quality assurance processes. The scheme for the observation of teaching and learning has been strengthened through the introduction of subject learning reviews that take a broader and more evaluative overview of teaching, learning, assessment and the students' experience in a curriculum area. These reviews are now giving a more realistic assessment of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and bringing

about much needed improvements. However, as the college is aware, still more needs to be done to eradicate the inconsistencies in provision.

- Performance management has been strengthened but target-setting to allow clear lines of accountability for teachers and managers is inconsistent. However, curriculum managers are keen to improve and welcome the introduction of more accountable lines of management through the restructuring process currently taking place in the college.
- The introduction of an electronic system has allowed teachers and managers to monitor students' progress more frequently and to intervene more speedily when students are not meeting their targets. It is too soon to know whether this will be reflected in improved outcomes, although in-year data show improvement in achievement in a number of subject areas.
- Students at Longley Park are proud to study academic and vocational courses, both separately and in combination. The college provides a good range of vocational courses across most subjects with clear progression routes, as well as a range of AS- and A-Level subjects. To better meet the needs of students, a few subject areas offer the opportunity for students to follow a common path for the first few weeks of the course before deciding whether to opt for vocational or academic study, or both; this has worked well in improving retention.
- The college meets its statutory requirements to safeguard students. Appropriate policies are in place and the college's links with external agencies ensure they are well placed to meet the needs of vulnerable learners. Students feel safe and incidents related to bullying and harassment are managed effectively, although the college recognises there is more work to be done on electronic safety. Arrangements to promote health and safety are satisfactory.
- Strong partnership arrangements ensure students receive good support and help to improve their personal, social and employability skills. For example, the National Careers Academy provides students with a business mentor and six weeks of paid employment in the summer. Students have also benefitted from the college's strong partnerships by being able to attend a parliamentary select committee and by paying a visit to the Santander' headquarters in Madrid.
- Equality and diversity are embedded throughout the college. It is highly inclusive and promotes understanding and respect amongst all groups of learners, offering a calm and friendly face to all its students who come from the ethnically diverse locality that it serves. Although a culture of respect and mutual tolerance pervades the college, not all teachers promote equality and diversity well in their lessons.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Longley Park Sixth Form 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	3	3	3
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	3	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	3	3

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Science and mathematics	3
Social sciences	3
Humanities	3

College details

Longley Park Sixth Form College	
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1,366
	Part-time: 0
Principal/CEO	Ms Mo Nisbet
Date of previous inspection	March 2009

Website address	http://www.longleypark.ac.uk
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College information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	52	0	173	5	1,127	9	0	0
Part-time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age								
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ none 							

Additional socio-economic information

Longley Park Sixth Form College is situated about three miles to the north of Sheffield. The college is in an area of very high social and economic deprivation. Students' prior attainment is much lower than is commonly found in sixth-form colleges. The college attracts students from a wide geographical area and the number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than that found locally. A significant proportion of the local population have no, or few qualifications beyond intermediate level.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Josephine Nowacki HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the college's vice principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the college'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 learning sessions, 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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