

Langdon College

Independent Specialist College

Inspection dates		11–13 June 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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:

- Students make good progress in the skills they need to become more independent and to achieve their long-term goals. These include living more independently as adults, obtaining qualifications and further training and gaining work experience and employment.
- Teaching and learning are good and the excellent support for students with complex needs greatly improves their behaviour and communication skills so that they can achieve a better quality and more productive life when they leave the college.
- The curriculum provides a comprehensive range of activities and therapies for students which are well suited to the wide variety of different needs.
- Good links with local community groups, employers and national organisations help leaders, managers and staff to successfully promote Jewish culture and customs and to provide an inclusive learning environment for Chareidi students.
- Leaders, managers and staff are highly dedicated and strongly focused on providing and maintaining the high standards it sets for students with complex learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve. The strong focus given to improving the quality of teaching and learning has been successful at maintaining the good quality of provision recognised at the last inspection.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- In a few sessions activities are not matched to the students' needs or levels of ability. Students' progress in the less effective sessions is not always evident. Although overall teaching and learning are predominantly good, not enough is yet outstanding. Learning targets are not consistently tracked, monitored and reviewed to ensure they provide sufficient challenge to ensure students achieve their full potential.
- The monitoring of the actions taken to improve the quality of provision lack rigour. The full impact on outcomes is not sufficiently evaluated to ensure actions for improvement are having the desired effect.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Consistently and regularly review the sufficiency and quality of individual learning targets to ensure students achieve their full potential.
- Increase the rate at which students make progress and the proportion of outstanding learning activities, by managers focusing more on the quality of learning evident in sessions when coaching and giving feedback to teachers.
- Improve the rigour of the monitoring of actions taken to improve overall college performance to evaluate precisely the effectiveness and impact on students' outcomes and the quality of provision.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Students make good progress relative to their starting points in developing the skills they need to become more independent and ready for work. They achieve high success rates in a good range of foundation courses linked effectively to their long-term goals. Students' social and spiritual awareness is heightened due to the focus given within the curriculum to the promotion of Judaism and Chareidi lifestyle.
- Students successfully achieve their personal and social skills learning targets. Students' self-confidence increases significantly during their time at the college, which is evidenced through the good standard of course work they produce, in their social and personal interactions with staff and peers, and through their very effective development of independent learning skills
- Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to build students' confidence and technical know-how. For example, a closed social network for students set up by the college, gives them the confidence and develops their ability to use a computer to access information in safety.
- Those students who have highly complex learning difficulties and disabilities make massive gains in their ability to express their needs and to effectively interact with others through the excellent use of communication aids. Students with challenging behaviours become far more able to express their frustrations and anxieties in more socially acceptable ways.
- Students gain useful functional skills, needed in their daily lives, such as handling and budgeting money. They learn to travel independently and to access local facilities with confidence. If capable, students walk on to work placements independently and a number of students have travelled home unescorted to London by public transport.
- Students make excellent progress in developing their independence and employability skills. Their progression into supported living arrangements, further training and supported employment is outstanding. The majority of students, when they leave college, move onto meaningful destinations. Many live more independent lives in the community, or progress onto further education or training.
- Students gain important skills which help them to prepare for employment. They learn to be punctual, dress appropriately, follow instructions and interact socially with other people. They benefit greatly from the comprehensive range of work-experience placements and the extensive links with community groups and organisations. Last year all of the five students who left the college are now working or gaining further employment skills through volunteering.
- Students enjoy their studies and the wide range of activities available. Their attendance and punctuality are very good. Overall retention rates are good and have improved from last year, with no student leaving prematurely this academic year.

- A comparison between different groups of students' achievements is difficult given the small number of students, the complexity of individual needs and highly individualised learning programmes. However, the college recognise that further development is required in the tracking and monitoring of students' progress against their learning targets to ensure all students, achieve their full potential.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The good overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment reported at the last inspection has been maintained. Students benefit from a welcoming environment that encourages them to learn. Highly motivated and enthusiastic teachers, therapists and support staff collaborate effectively to develop students' skills and understanding; they have high expectations of what the students can achieve.
- Learning is planned well to build on students' individual strengths and interests and to maximise their progress. Most lessons are purposeful, productive and sufficiently challenging. Teachers use questioning techniques skilfully to help students to think, to recall what they have learnt and to reinforce new concepts. In the best lessons, clear expectations are set for both students and support staff and involve the use of realistic, practical settings, often out in the wider community. Teachers successfully challenge the students to solve problems themselves instead of depending upon others for help.
- Less-effective lessons are dominated by the teacher and too much intervention from support staff. Such teachers fail to assess how well the understanding of students is developing. Opportunities to develop independence, literacy and numeracy are missed. Lessons requiring improvement demonstrate a poor match between what students needed to learn and the planned activity.
- Very good focus is placed on developing students' ICT skills. Teachers and therapists use innovative approaches and are skilled at using popular and widely used technological devices, such as tablets and mobile phones, to enhance age-appropriate learning and increase independence. Students in independent living skills lessons produce a video clip which demonstrates how to prepare the kitchen before cooking, make the snack, wash and clear away. The creation of this virtual tutor is used effectively to embed learning and promote independence in other learning environments, such as the students' residences.
- Initial assessment is comprehensive and thorough, and therapists work closely with teachers to design targets around students' aspirations and long-term goals including communication and behaviour management. Thorough initial, baseline and continuing assessment practices inform individual learning, behaviour and support planning. Challenging individual targets are based on the outcome of rigorous assessment. However, targets are not always tracked or monitored well enough to ensure the pace of learning for all students is appropriate.
- Staff provide frequent, positive and encouraging verbal feedback in lessons on students' progress. All students are encouraged to evaluate their progress at the end of each lesson using learning logs. Teachers effectively contribute to these individual logs and share them with personal tutors. These, and the college traffic light system, provide teachers with a good understanding of students' progress.
- There is good emphasis on developing students literacy, numeracy and communication skills and these are successfully embedded across the curriculum, with discrete individual lessons providing extra support where appropriate.
- Information, advice and guidance, and support are good. Individual tutorials are effective in enabling students to reflect upon their own progress. Behavioural incidents are very well managed. Transition planning starts at an early stage and incorporates regular discussions to help students successfully plan progress towards their main goals. Work-experience placements, with a wide range of local employers, ensure that learners have good opportunities and support to develop the skills they need for future employment and life.

- Speech and language provision is excellent. All new students have a comprehensive and detailed speech and language assessment which clearly informs their individual learning plans. The application and promotion of communication strategies is highly effective. A group of students involved in drama, recently visited a local college to explain to the students about the food and customs involved in a Jewish wedding celebration. Specialist interventions such as social stories and symbols help students to develop social skills and manage their own behaviour.
- Inspectors agree with students that the college community is harmonious, tolerant and promotes equality of opportunity through a culture of mutual respect. Students say that they feel confident about reporting instances of discrimination or bullying and know that staff will act on these immediately.
- Good attention is given to raise students' awareness of health and safety, especially in the work environment. Risk-assessments are comprehensive and receive a high priority throughout the college.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have a clear vision focused on improving students' independence and employability skills. This is successfully achieved whilst promoting Jewish culture, customs and religious protocols. The Principal, managers and staff have high ambitions for the students and provide individual programmes of learning which are highly responsive to their needs and aspirations. The operational and communication links between the residences and college provide coherent learning programmes which greatly enhance students' personal and social skills development.
- The quality of provision is very effectively monitored and staff at all levels are involved in identifying and remedying actions that need to be taken to ensure the high standards set by the college are maintained. The governing body oversees the work of the college well and provides good support to leaders and managers through its increasingly active involvement in college activities and quality improvement work. It is starting to increase the level of challenge and hold the Principal and senior managers more to account for college performance.
- Leaders and senior managers have a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the quality of provision. They rigorously quality assure and self-assesses the college's provision and have been successful at identifying and implementing actions to address areas for improvement. However, the college's evaluation of the impact of these actions on the college's overall performance does not currently ensure that the pace of continuous improvements is sustained and the link between college performance and outcomes for students is fully recognised.
- The college's rigorous lesson observation arrangements are effective in improving the overall quality of learning activities. Inadequate learning sessions have been eliminated and during the inspection the majority of sessions observed by inspectors were good or better. However, in the feedback and action plans given to teachers by college observers, too much focus is given to the quality of the teaching taking place rather than on what progress is being made by students in their learning. Teachers, therefore, do not always plan relevant and meaningful activities which take into account what students need to learn, how students learn best and what skills they need to progress further.
- Staff have good skills and show high levels of commitment and dedication in meeting the needs of students with very complex learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff performance is closely monitored. Relevant training and support is provided if required. This is highly valued by staff who are highly complimentary about the ways in which the staff training and development has improved their skills and expertise.
- Resources are good overall but occasionally noise from adjacent classrooms is too loud, making listening to the teacher difficult. Communication aids and ICT including tablets are provided and

are extremely useful at enhancing students' ability to communicate with others. The use of local facilities enables students to integrate successfully into the wider community.

- Very useful links are made with the local Jewish community, local synagogues, youth groups, schools, local colleges and national organisations to enhance the students' learning experience and provide a good range of opportunities for them to learn skills needed in their future lives. The college works closely with parents to address the barriers faced by students which get in the way of them making progress in their learning. For example, by agreeing on a consistent behaviour management approach to use at home and at college.
- Equality and diversity are successfully promoted by the college and are continuously evaluated and monitored. Actions are taken to ensure students' needs are met across all ability levels, learning difficulties and disabilities. The college is working very effectively to provide a suitable learning environment for Chareidi students. They integrate successfully into college life and within the wider local community.
- The college is addressing the wide gender imbalance by actively recruiting and encouraging more female referrals. Analysing achievement data and gaps between different groups of students with very different high complexity of needs and with such small numbers, is not useful or meaningful. Leaders and managers instead successfully identify when students are underachieving and act quickly to address any problem.
- Students' views across all aspects of college life include their input into course design. For example, they are active in developing a poster alerting fellow students to issues relating to bullying, discrimination and harassment. Students themselves are responsible for raising awareness of issues impacting on their safety and well-being.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are successfully implemented. Reports of students' challenging behaviour are rigorously analysed to help staff to deal with them appropriately and to support students effectively in managing their own behaviour. All staff complete safeguarding training and the necessary checks are taken to ensure their suitability to work with vulnerable young people and adults.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Langdon 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
Independent living and leisure skills			2

Additional socio-economic information

Langdon College is a national specialist residential and day college for Jewish students aged 16 to 25 years who have learning difficulties and disabilities; it is located in North Manchester. The college's primary focus is to help students develop independent living and employability skills in an environment that is culturally and religiously appropriate to the Jewish faith. Students attending the college come from the major Jewish communities in North London, Greater Manchester, and Gateshead.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Kath Smith

Three additional inspectors, assisted by the head of education 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 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 provider.

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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