

LeSoCo

First re-inspection monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 130415

Name of lead inspector: Julie Steele, Her Majesty's Inspector

Last day of inspection: 29 January 2014

Type of provider: General further education college

Address: LeSoCo
Lewisham Way
London
SE4 1UT

Telephone number: 020 8692 0353

Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first re-inspection monitoring visit to LeSoCo following publication of the inspection report on 9 January 2014, which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

LeSoCo was formed in August 2012 by the merger of Lewisham College and Southwark College. The college provides a vocational curriculum and has an increasing focus on preparing learners for employment. The purpose of this visit was to establish what initial steps the college has taken to improve provision, in response to the previous inspection, and to set key priorities for the next visit.

Themes

What progress is the college making in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment?

Senior managers have consulted widely with their stakeholder groups and prepared an action plan to rectify the shortcomings identified at the time of inspection. This action plan has appropriate short and medium term targets. The emphasis over the next six months must be to implement effectively the action plan, in order to rapidly improve and transform teaching, learning and assessment to consistently high standards across the organisation, ensuring staff at every level recognise their individual contribution to improving standards of learning and better outcomes for learners.

The college's review of procedures for observing lessons has resulted in further extending observations to every aspect of learning and the learner experience. Quantitative information drawn from learner satisfaction surveys, learner success rates, attendance and punctuality now informs a risk register. This register prioritises which aspects of provision should be observed and improved in order to have the maximum impact on rapidly enhancing the learner experience and improving learners' outcomes. Action taken to strengthen the rigour of performance management systems will expedite the improvement or departure of teaching staff that consistently underperform.

Arrangements to support staff to improve their teaching practice through coaching and professional development is extensive, but managers recognise that even more support is required to ensure all staff have the competence and the confidence to plan learning that is lively, challenging and individual to each learner, enabling learners to develop the academic knowledge and professional skills required by universities and industry. Not all teachers use learning technologies well to enliven, enhance and extend learning. The current capacity of improvement practitioners to support teaching teams to develop the craft of teaching systematically across college

is insufficient to achieve the rapid improvements required to raise the overall standard of teaching, learning and assessment to consistently good.

Senior managers are currently undertaking a strategic review of the curriculum offer for engineering in light of the college's agenda for strengthening science, technology, engineering and manufacturing (STEM). The review will encompass how to ensure current teaching space contributes to a positive learning experience, the existing staff capabilities in using e-learning and technology, and the overall competence of staff.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure observations for all staff involved in the learner experience occur under the new arrangements. This should result in individual staff development plans that are monitored regularly and lead to an improvement in their performance consistently to, at least, good and with a greater focus on planning for personalised learning. Prioritise observations on areas of provision known to be at risk. Implement the performance management system with immediate effect.
- Review and remove remaining operational barriers that hinder the punctual attendance of learners, ensure staff consistently adhere to the college's policy on attendance and consistently reinforce to learners industry's expectations of prompt time keeping.
- Implement targeted professional development strategies linked more closely to a whole organisation approach to improving the standards of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Support the bespoke needs of curriculum areas and individual staff to act rapidly to rectify the shortcomings identified at inspection and make better and more effective use of technology to extend and enhance learning.
- As a matter of urgency, train staff on how to plan and manage the findings of learners' diagnostic assessment in their individual lessons, assessments and reviews. Follow up all training with targeted observations to monitor its impact and inform further development.
- Extend and expand the existing coaching model to all teaching, assessing, and training staff, thereby developing a 'coaching community of best practice' approach to modelling inspirational teaching and learning.
- Complete the strategic review of engineering with recommendations for rapid improvements to learning for current learners.

What progress is the college making in improving the quality of provision in English and mathematics?

Success rates in functional English and mathematics are too low. Not all vocational members of staff hold a Level 2 qualification in English and/or mathematics. Staff do not use the findings of diagnostic testing to inform their planning for individual

learners, to set targets for individual learners or to communicate planning effectively to in-class support assistants.

Senior management are working to improve a number of operational constraints that are holding back the progress of current learners. These include timely staff access to examination results and a wider access to e-learning. Managers plan to introduce a programme of training for all functional skills staff to enable them to support learners more effectively by using on-line technology and traditional teaching. All vocational staff are now expected to have, or to be working towards, a Level 2 English and mathematics qualification to enable them to better promote English and mathematics in their vocational area and to support learners. Functional English and mathematics staff will be working towards higher level qualifications in literacy and numeracy.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure all individual staff development plans accurately reflect progress towards gaining English and mathematics qualifications, measured against the target completion dates in the college's post-inspection action plan. Audit the impact of this training on the learner experience through the new arrangements for observation of teaching, learning and assessment and through improved success rates.
- Through the new arrangements for observation of teaching, learning and assessment and enhanced performance management, monitor and review how well staff are using the findings of diagnostic testing to inform their teaching and the extent to which staff effectively work with in-class support assistants.

What progress is the college making to strengthen tutorial arrangements?

Tutorial arrangements for learners at the time of inspection were relatively new. Monitoring learners' progress is not effective in all subject areas and communication between subject teachers and tutors requires further improvement. Senior managers remain committed to the current arrangements for tutorials while recognising the importance of supporting learners better. Urgent management attention is needed to ensure the progress of all learners is monitored regularly, especially in those subject areas known to be underperforming, to ensure improved success rates in the coming academic year.

Priorities for improvement

- Enhance communications between tutors, subject teachers, additional support staff and learners.
- As a matter of urgency, update the college's 'at risk' register, clearly showing individual learners' progress to date, their revised targets for success and identifying clearly how all staff involved with their learning will best support them to reach their individual potential.

- Guarantee the entitlement that all learners have a regular performance review of their progress.
- Introduce the planned training programme for all new tutors to develop consistently good tutoring skills. This should include setting specific and measurable targets for learners.

What progress is the college making to strengthen the arrangements for learning support?

The college is successfully attracting a diverse range of learners and many progress from entry level to intermediate and advanced levels. Much of the specialist learning support is good. Nevertheless, the inspection identified that learners on entry level courses would benefit from more continuity of specialist support. Staff providing additional classroom support are not always adequately prepared for lessons.

Priorities for improvement

- Under the new arrangements for observing learning, managers must ensure that teaching staff plan for learning effectively, clearly identifying how in-class support staff will work with individual learners to support their progress. Plans must identify how teachers and support staff will work together to improve their practice.
- Extend the existing good practice in supporting learners with specialist support needs across all subject areas, particularly to those learners progressing from entry level provision.

What progress has the college made in reviewing communications across the organisation?

Managers recognise communication between all staff involved with the learner experience requires further strengthening to ensure a consistently good experience for every learner. Staff often work effectively in their own team on discrete aspects of the learning experience; however, they do not always effectively share information and expertise about individual learners with all colleagues involved in the learner's progress. Managers require stronger formal procedures to enable staff to share information about learners effectively. The learners' experience remains inconsistent across the college and across the various sites where provision is offered.

Priorities for improvement

- Provide effective procedures to improve communication between tutors, subject teachers, additional support staff and learners.
- Use the post-inspection action plan to continue to work with staff at all levels, and across all sites, to embed a culture of continual improvement that leads to improving learners' success rates.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014