

LeSoCo

General further education college

Inspection dates		25–29 November 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate-4
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Inadequate-4
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is inadequate because:

- Despite improvements, the proportion of learners who successfully complete advanced-level courses continues to be too low.
- Too few apprentices achieve their qualifications and complete their programmes within the expected time.
- Success rates for functional skills in English and mathematics are too low.
- The rates of attendance for some subject areas continue to be low and teachers do not adequately challenge poor punctuality in line with college expectations.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate in engineering, foundation English and foundation mathematics.
- The learning support provided in lessons is not always sufficient in quantity or quality.
- The arrangements to monitor the progress of learners are not working effectively in all subjects.
- Management actions to bring about improvements have not yet made enough impact across all aspects of the college's provision.

This provider has the following strengths:

- The Principal, governors and senior staff have planned and managed the merger of two large colleges particularly well, providing very strong leadership.
- Success rates have improved significantly and for much of the classroom-based provision are now in line with national rates.
- Teachers on many vocational courses make very effective connections with employers in order to prepare learners for future destinations.
- The college provides an inclusive, welcoming and safe environment; managers listen and respond to the views of learners, who treat staff with respect and support each other well.
- The excellent welfare and support services are very effective in providing interventions which enable learners in challenging circumstances to remain on their programmes.

- The college has an excellent range of productive partnerships, which contribute well to the enrichment of learners' experiences.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates on advanced-level courses by:
 - having high expectations of learners in terms of standards, effort and independent learning
 - encouraging learners to aim high in terms of target grades
 - tracking and monitoring the progress of learners more effectively.
- Make sure that assessments on apprenticeship and workplace programmes are both timely and thorough.
- Improve punctuality by making sure that all teachers follow college guidelines when learners arrive late to lessons.
- Improve the quality of provision in mathematics and English by ensuring that:
 - more teachers have the required subject specialist knowledge and experience
 - diagnostic assessments are completed on time
 - teachers use the results of the diagnoses to plan effectively for individual learners
 - all members of staff emphasise to learners the importance of functional skills
 - classes contain learners working at similar levels
 - teachers on vocational courses have stronger links with English and mathematics staff.
- Continue to improve the quality of all teaching and learning by:
 - further extending the coaching programme
 - sharing the good practice in the college
 - encouraging the use of activities and projects that engage learners
 - making better use of learning technologies
 - expecting learners to work to industry and commercial standards in practical settings.
- Strengthen the tutorial arrangements so that:
 - learners across the college, who are at risk of dropping out, continue in learning
 - attendance is closely monitored
 - learners have timely individual reviews of progress
 - learners benefit from reviews of their progress by subject specialist staff
 - learners benefit from sufficient group tutorials over the year.
- Review the arrangements for learning support across the college, so that:
 - the good practice in the college is extended to all subject areas
 - learners on entry level programmes can benefit from continuity of specialist support
 - additional classroom support for functional skills is targeted effectively
 - learning support assistants are adequately prepared for lessons.
- Improve the facilities for engineering and make sure programmes of learning are challenging and enable learners to progress to degree courses.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Overall, the proportion of learners who successfully complete their courses has shown a steady and significant improvement over the past three years, and, as a result of effective management action, much of the classroom-based provision has outcomes which are around national rates.
- Achievements and success rates for adults on long, intermediate-level classroom-based courses and for 16- to 18-year-olds on long entry-level classroom-based courses are high.
- Despite this overall improvement, the success rates for learners studying at advanced level on all types of provision continue to be too low.
- Many apprentices make slow progress and do not achieve their qualifications within the expected time.
- Overall retention rates have improved following management actions. However, poor attendance and punctuality persist in many subject areas and are not always challenged in line with college requirements.
- Inspectors saw good development of work-related skills in dance, art and design, catering, health and social care, sport and some construction classes.
- The college closely monitors gaps in performance between different groups. Where gaps in performance have been identified for learners from specific minority ethnic backgrounds in classroom-based provision, the college has taken very successful action. Learners receiving additional support achieve as well as their peers, and the gap in achievements between younger learners and adults has decreased to a satisfactory level. However, learners in care, or who have previously been in care, achieve less well than their peers.
- The gap in achievements between different groups on apprenticeship programmes continues to be too wide, although learners receiving additional support often perform better than their peers.
- Enterprise, employability and entrepreneurship activities are now included in all study programmes for 16- to 19-year-olds, and learners have a wide range of opportunities to prepare for employment, including work experience, visits from employers and work-related projects. However, not all learners have yet engaged with these new developments.
- The college provides good opportunities for learners to develop their personal and social skills. Learners successfully enter local and national competitions and raise funds for charity; they have the opportunity to participate in the management and decision making of the college by becoming learner representatives and providing feedback to staff. The development of social skills is particularly good on programmes at entry level.
- Although improving, too many learners do not pass their qualifications in the functional skills of mathematics and English.
- Internal rates of progression to higher levels of study for learners who remain at LeSoCo are high in many subject areas.
- Many learners from access courses, creative arts and health and social care, progress to higher education, although numbers are low in construction, engineering and ICT. Learners in sport, catering and floristry progress particularly well to employment.
- Rates of progression to apprenticeships and employment in engineering are low. Learners on engineering courses are not adequately prepared for degree courses in higher education (HE).

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Although good in many areas, it is inadequate in engineering, foundation English and foundation mathematics.

- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent, with significant variations between subjects. Learning coaches have provided targeted support for lecturers to raise the standards of teaching and learning. This action is showing early signs of success, but has not had sufficient time to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the whole college.
- In the good lessons, for example in supported learning and business, teachers have high expectations of their learners. They plan lessons well, with stimulating activities. In group work, learners support each other and make good progress. Teachers use question-and-answer techniques well to provoke meaningful discussions with learners.
- In weaker lessons learners make less progress and are not engaged. Teachers have not planned sufficiently to meet individual needs. The pace of lessons is too slow, with too few activities that engage, motivate and challenge learners. Teachers talk too much and do not place sufficient emphasis on what learners have understood and learnt.
- In good lessons, for example in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and in the training for apprentice classroom assistants, teachers and trainers are skilful in providing constructive oral feedback. Too often, in other subjects, feedback is of minimal use in helping learners to improve. The quality of written feedback in weaker provision is poor, and teachers ignore incorrect use of English.
- The planning for assessment on apprenticeship programmes has been poor, but recent action in business and on programmes for classroom assistants has led to early signs of improvement.
- A recently introduced 'enterprise hub' provides a designated area to develop entrepreneurship and enterprise, and to extend independent learning within a virtual learning environment. However, it is too soon to judge its impact as not all teachers and learners have used this facility, particularly those who study on other sites.
- Not all teachers and learners use the college's technological resources well to enhance learning. In a good catering lesson in the college's restaurant, teachers and learners used learning technology creatively to enable learners to evaluate their skills, and in a dance theory lesson learners saw extracts of historically significant dance productions by choreographers such as Merce Cunningham. However, in too many lessons teachers used the interactive whiteboards just for simple lists.
- The teaching of functional skills is inadequate. In most subject areas teachers do not use the results from the initial assessment to inform the planning of learning. The diverse needs of learners are not adequately met in many classes, and low attendance means that many learners are not receiving the support they require to achieve their qualifications.
- The provision of learning support assistants in the classroom is variable, and in some areas the resource is insufficient. Although examples of good practice were seen, the learning support staff were not always able to respond effectively to very diverse needs of the learners, particularly where teachers had not briefed them about what was expected.
- The progress of learners is not adequately monitored in all subject areas. Ten weeks into the programme, in many subject areas, not enough learners had benefited from an individual tutorial to review their progress. Subject specialists and personal tutors do not always communicate well with each other, so learners are not benefiting from specialist subject advice.
- Teachers in vocational subjects are well qualified, often with good knowledge of the industry. However, not all mathematics and English staff have specialist qualifications.
- The staff in the student services department provide an excellent, well-used range of pastoral services for learners. These include practical advice on finance, transport, part-time employment and housing. The college has a number of well-established links with external agencies to support the many learners who need specialist advice.
- Specialist learning support staff provide very effective support for learners who have specific learning needs; although, in a minority of cases, this support was not available until several weeks into the programme.
- Learners and staff often well work together with a high level of mutual respect, creating a harmonious learning environment. However, the extent to which issues relating to equality and

diversity are promoted varies significantly, from very good examples in ESOL and business to inadequate promotion in engineering.

Engineering

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Although success rates have improved and most learners now pass their qualifications, the number achieving high grades is very low, as is the number of learners who progress to employment or degree courses.
- Most teachers are well qualified and have a strong knowledge of engineering, which they demonstrate well in lessons.
- Despite this, teachers do not plan effectively to meet individual needs, share lesson objectives with learners, check understanding or recap at the end. Lessons are often dull and uninspiring and teachers make insufficient use of learning activities that engage and stretch all learners.
- Teachers do not set high expectations for learners, who are expected to work to a pass level rather than being encouraged to aim higher. The progress of learners in lessons is poor. Despite this, the majority of learners who do continue to attend lessons ask questions and are eager to learn.
- The attendance of learners on most courses is well below the college target, and teachers do not challenge learners sufficiently about poor attendance or punctuality. A number of lessons begin late and many learners do not start practical activities until at least 30 minutes into the lesson.
- Engineering resources are outdated and poor. Workshops are equipped to a minimal level and do not mirror current industry standards. Theory classrooms are poorly furnished and provide uninspiring environments; teachers only have access to two interactive whiteboards on the shared site. The three-dimensional printer is broken.
- In the small minority of lessons where technology is used, it is limited to basic presentation of slides. The college's new virtual learning resources, at a different site, are under utilised.
- The opportunities for learners to learn about employment are inadequate. They have very few opportunities for work experience, visits or contact with employers. Very few learners know how to gain an apprenticeship or progress onto a work-based programme or into higher education.
- Initial advice and guidance on the programmes are satisfactory. However, the results of assessments in mathematics and English are not effectively integrated into lesson planning. Learners who are working at levels below the main qualification level do not receive appropriate support in vocational classes.
- Staff do not set learning targets for learners or track their progress effectively. Tutorials are often unproductive; many learners cannot recall when they last received a tutorial, when they were given individual targets relating to their qualification, or when they had a discussion about issues such as attendance.
- The development of skills in English is insufficient. Teachers do not correct learners' grammatical mistakes in order for learners to improve. However, teachers try to improve mathematical skills in practical lessons through measuring components and materials.
- Functional skills lessons are unsatisfactory. Learners within the group are often working at three different levels, but all learners are expected to complete the same task, without sufficient classroom support in place.
- Learners are very respectful of the staff and their peers, but teachers do not actively promote awareness of equality and diversity in lessons. Learners do not develop a good understanding of these important issues.

- Attention to health and safety and safeguarding is good. Learners feel safe and follow workshop safety instructions by wearing the correct personal protective equipment (PPE), and following the safety instructions when operating the machinery.

Building services and construction crafts

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. This is reflected in the outcomes. Although an increasing number of learners on college-based courses achieve their qualifications, those on advanced programmes achieve less well. Progress on apprenticeship and workplace learning programmes has been slow, but early signs are that this is improving.
- Attendance on some courses is very low. Lateness is not always appropriately challenged by teachers and is detrimental to everyone in the group.
- The college workshops provide realistic working environments where learners develop appropriate industry standard practical skills. In a good practical painting and decorating lesson, learners planned their work for the day, demonstrated a range of decorative techniques and reflected on the quality of their achievements.
- In less effective practice, teachers provide solutions rather than use probing questions to develop learners' own problem-solving skills. Learners are not always encouraged to complete tasks to industrial timescales.
- Teaching in theory lessons is sometimes dull and does not engage learners. The use of questioning is weak and teachers do not plan to stretch and challenge learners.
- In trowel occupations, tutorials are used to tackle lateness and to set challenging targets. However, in other areas, tutorials are weak and some learners have not yet had an individual session with their tutor.
- Plumbing and plastering lecturers are very successful in finding work experience and employment opportunities within local companies. One teacher regularly takes a group of level 1 plumbing learners to work on a local community project.
- The standard of learners' written work is satisfactory, but the quality of feedback is variable. In the best cases, work is annotated well and provides positive, detailed comments on how the learner can improve, but in other cases it is not sufficient.
- Few classrooms provide computing facilities, and too few learners make use of on-line resources or visit the college's 'enterprise hub' on the main site. Teachers are not yet confident enough to use technological resources to enhance learning.
- In practical lessons, teachers use naturally-occurring opportunities to develop learners' confidence in using number. However, the embedding of literacy in theory classes is weak.
- Too many learners in construction fail to make adequate progress in the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Additional support for these learners is inadequate.
- Opportunities to promote equality and diversity in lessons are often missed. Teachers do not plan lessons well enough to challenge and develop learners' awareness of equality and diversity themes or to meet the needs of individual learners.

Teaching and lecturing and training to provide classroom support

Good

19+ Learning programmes Apprenticeships

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, and this is reflected in the very high proportion of all trainees who successfully complete their qualifications. However, in 2012/13, the vast majority of apprentices did not complete their qualification by their planned end date. Managers have recognised this problem and have significantly improved the frequency of the monitoring of performance.
- Trainer assessors and tutors plan and manage training well; they incorporate the skills trainees and apprentices need in order to respond to the range of learners they work with. Taught lessons are lively, stimulating and challenging. As they critique each other's presentations, trainees discuss examples of their work, using in-depth questioning and critical analysis.
- Apprentices find that the training improves their confidence and understanding of their role as classroom assistants. Previous trainee teachers spoke highly of the way in which the training enabled them to progress to higher levels of training or improve their employment prospects.
- Initial assessments are good, and trainer assessors identify clear learning needs and targets for apprentices to tackle in order to complete their programme successfully. Trainee teachers complete a useful personal analysis which tutors use well in planning learning to suit individuals' learning styles, and to ensure all trainees are engaged in lessons.
- Trainees receive comprehensive support from tutors, trainer assessors and functional skills mentors to develop their English and mathematical skills. Apprentices in schools become more confident as they settle in to working with schoolteachers, and confidently support their learners. All trainees quickly become competent in planning learning and assessment activities, assessing risk and providing feedback.
- Senior staff monitor trainees' progress and performance closely. They set performance targets for trainer assessors, based on outcomes for trainees, to ensure trainees stay on track.
- Apprentices meet with their trainer assessors at least monthly for training, assessment, or to review work. Apprentices understand the tasks they are expected to complete following reviews, although this is not always well recorded in the written report. Questioning on health and safety and matters relating to equality is often superficial, or just repetition of work completed earlier in the session.
- Assessments are well planned and organised. Trainer assessors provide helpful feedback to trainees on written work, with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. Trainees on teaching courses find observation feedback from tutors and fellow trainees helpful in developing their skills further.
- Information, advice and guidance are good, and provided both at the start and throughout training. Trainer assessors and support staff inform trainees and apprentices well of additional training available, and of progression routes to further training opportunities.
- Trainer assessors refer frequently to diversity, for example in discussing the different cultural expectations in schools to enrich trainees' understanding. The teaching and training staff create an inclusive, welcoming environment where all trainees and apprentices feel safe and valued, and are able openly to discuss their training.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)**16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Learners gain many useful additional qualifications, although the proportion of learners successfully completing ESOL qualifications is slightly below national rates.
- Learners develop their language and employability skills well. They develop confidence in studying and a significant number progress to higher level courses.
- Managers and teachers closely monitor learners' attendance, but this continues to be too low in some classes.
- High expectations are set for learners who are successfully engaged and motivated by teachers. Very good academic and personal support is provided to learners and this is helping learners to stay on their courses and succeed.
- In good lessons, teachers use a variety of resources and learning technologies to stimulate learners. They have a good rapport with learners and activities are well managed. Learners are encouraged to learn collaboratively and are well supported when practising and developing their language skills.
- In the minority of less effective lessons, teachers do not plan to meet individual learners' needs, and the learning targets agreed with learners are sometimes too broad. More able learners are not sufficiently challenged and finish set tasks quickly; teachers do not have enough extension activities and resources prepared to maintain learners' interest.
- Learners' starting points, learning styles and additional needs are accurately identified. However, teachers do not always make sufficient use of these findings to plan the content of learning and set individual targets.
- Teachers' assessment of learning is thorough and frequent. In the better lessons, teachers regularly provide constructive feedback to consolidate main learning points. Homework tasks and marked work are used well to reinforce and build learners' language skills.
- In taught mathematics lessons, teachers do not always stretch those with good prior mathematical knowledge sufficiently, or provide sufficient support for those struggling with mathematical language.
- Learners benefit from good information, advice, guidance and support. Support for progression to further study or employment is good.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good in many lessons. However, in a minority of lessons, opportunities are missed to build on learners' prior knowledge and cultural experiences. In a good lesson, following a discussion about disability, learners independently researched and wrote an article about a female diver's experience of losing a limb in a swimming accident. In a sensitively delivered tutorial, learners enhanced their understanding of various forms of bullying.

Independent living and leisure skills**16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, and lead to good outcomes with outstanding success rates by learners. Teachers have high expectations of learners and provide skilful, well-judged support. They work very effectively with learners' fluctuating ability to concentrate or manage their own behaviour.

- Lessons are lively and stimulating with practical, real work tasks and creative activities that engage learners strongly. Teachers use information technology imaginatively to bring the outside world into the classroom and extend the range of learners’ experiences. They plan carefully to meet individual learners’ needs with well-designed learning targets and use questions to individual learners very effectively to help them think.
- In a few lessons, learners’ targets are too broad to be achievable. In others, teachers do not allow enough time for learners to think before requiring a response. Some staff speak for too long for learners to remain focused, or do not ensure that all learners have a chance to answer questions.
- Learning support staff who are employed by the college are committed and well informed, but too few in number, and temporary staff are often less effective, to the detriment of learners.
- A new system to establish learners’ starting points includes evidence gathered during the first half term. The college has yet to find a way of capturing all aspects of progress made by students over time, so that it can be easily understood by parents and learners.
- The college does not yet have a specialist initial assessment for speech and language to enable staff to devise the most effective strategies for improving the communication skills of learners with high levels of need.
- Learners receive immediate encouraging verbal feedback on their work, with clear ideas about how to improve further. Staff provide detailed and constructive written feedback in termly reports on learners’ progress overall.
- Teachers focus strongly on the development of learners’ communication skills in speech or signing. Learners with the capacity to progress to level 1 courses have well-taught functional skills lessons in English and mathematics. All staff integrate literacy and numeracy tasks within learning activities, although not all teachers are equally skilled in these specialisms.
- Information, advice and guidance are good, and pre-entry advice is particularly helpful. Parents and carers have good opportunities to visit the college before the start of the programme. Special schools provide useful information about learners’ needs for specialist equipment or specific medical conditions before the learners arrive. A specialist transition course, on two days weekly, caters for learners leaving the college for provision in the community.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in learning is good. Creative and performing arts teachers focus strongly on diversity; for example, studies have included portraits of Black subjects, work by a Black poet, paintings by artists with disabilities who use their mouths and feet to work with, and the illustration of mathematical shapes using Islamic tiles.

Foundation mathematics

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. As a result, although a good number of learners achieve high grades on GCSE mathematics courses, success rates on all mathematics courses across the college remain stubbornly below national averages.
- Poor attendance and punctuality are common, which has a significantly detrimental impact on learners’ achievements. Lessons are sometimes cancelled and the time used for other activities.
- In better lessons, learners work independently and develop good problem-solving skills. For example, learners are able to collect and analyse data linked to themes in health and social care. Teachers regularly circulate and ask questions to check progress, with clear stages in the lesson to bring in new mathematical skills. Learners provide good peer support in group work.
- In less effective lessons, planning is poor. Many lessons are slow, with activities targeted at all learners, so that more able learners are not learning anything new in the lesson. This is a particular difficulty where learners assessed as needing to study at different levels are all

placed in one class. Teachers talk too much and use uninspiring activities, such as putting worked examples on the board without any input from learners.

- Teachers do not check and correct worked problems, and offer weak explanations to learners who have produced incorrect answers. Teachers' questioning of learners is not specific enough. Poorly linked examples from the world of work fail to show learners the value of real-life mathematics. Teachers do not review homework during lessons to build on new ideas.
- In general, teachers' use of learning technologies is limited and mainly used to give instructions or show static examples. Very few learners use the new 'learning hub' to supplement classroom learning. In one example of better practice, a teacher made use of an electronic game to check on previous learning.
- Significant numbers of learners have not completed mathematics assessments, and so teachers are not provided with sufficient information to plan for gaps in knowledge. Teachers do not monitor or track the progress of learners adequately. Most learners know what mathematics course they are taking, but not how well they are getting on. Learners set their own targets, but do not benefit from professional guidance.
- Teachers do not plan clearly for the use of learning support assistants in their lessons, and fail to communicate lesson priorities to these staff. The information profiles about learners note the challenging wider circumstances of the learners' lives, but do not include learning targets or strategies to help learners build on mathematical knowledge.
- The marking and feedback on learners' work are weak. Teachers make general comments, such as 'must look at more calculations', rather than providing guidance on how to improve. The standard of presentation of mathematical workings and findings within learners' work shows low expectations from teachers.
- Most learners have a clear idea of their next steps following their courses, and have high aspiration. However, teachers do not emphasise sufficiently the importance of mathematics in other contexts, particularly employment.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is adequate, although support for the diverse needs of individual learners is weak. A rare example of mathematics used in relation to equality and diversity was in a lesson where learners discussed the proportion of men in social care jobs, and looked at barriers to participation and positive role models in sport.

Foundation English

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. As a result, learners do not attend classes regularly and too few achieve their qualifications. Most learners make slow progress in lessons and standards of work are poor. Many arrive late for lessons, disrupting learning.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of learners. The pace in many lessons is slow, with insufficiently stimulating learning activities and few links to learners' vocational courses. Learners are not provided with sufficient opportunities to extend their thinking skills and practise higher level skills through more challenging reading and writing tasks.
- The provision of learning support is inconsistent, both in quantity and quality. Where available, experienced support staff plan well with teachers to adapt materials to support less able learners effectively in lessons. However, the provision of this support is limited, and it is not routinely provided for entry and foundation level functional skills courses, or for GCSE learners.
- In a minority of lessons, experienced tutors plan in detail to address the needs of learners with a wide range of abilities. Teachers use their skills well to ensure that learners work enthusiastically on relevant, carefully-planned and challenging activities. Learners on a care course were supported well to extend their skills through planning and organising a fundraising project for recent typhoon victims.

- However, in the majority of lessons, teachers set lesson objectives that are not sufficiently well planned to be challenging for all learners. In these lessons, tutors do not use a wide enough variety of resources to suit the varied abilities of all learners. Most resources are paper based and, too often, of poor quality, and teachers make little use of learning technologies to stimulate learners.
- Initial assessment processes have been strengthened to identify learners' starting points and place them on appropriate courses. However, the diagnostic process is not implemented systematically enough to ensure that all learners are assessed, and the results are not used fully to inform lesson planning or to set learners clear individual targets.
- Teachers do not give enough detailed feedback to learners. They make good use of general verbal feedback to motivate learners to achieve their tasks. However, feedback does not focus on enabling learners to develop strategies, such as proof reading, to enable them to develop greater independence and take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Teachers do not provide learners with clear enough information of expectations and the standards they need to reach to be ready for assessment. They do not always promote functional English well, with too few resources and information on the college's virtual learning environment. Resources are not sufficiently contextualised to reinforce the importance of functional English in other settings.
- Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily in lessons, with resources reflecting the cultural diversity of learners. Learners work well in diverse groups and support each other well. Teachers recognise and value the differences in learners' backgrounds, and the range of experiences the learners contribute. However, teachers do not always take opportunities as they arise to explore current issues relating to diversity and equality.

Administration and business management

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes
Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is reflected in good outcomes for learners in workplace learning, recent good improvements for learners in classroom-based learning, and improvements in outcomes for functional skills; although, the latter remains below average. However, this improved position is not yet mirrored in the outcomes for apprentices, which are too low. Rates of attendance are below the college's target.
- Most teaching is highly effective. Learners enjoy learning and produce good work, participating well in lively debates that demonstrate an understanding of topics being taught. Lessons flow well, with clear learning aims, and all learners, no matter their abilities, are challenged and stretched.
- In a small minority of lessons, when teachers do not outline clear learning outcomes for the session or fail to set learners appropriate goals, learners make little progress and some become easily distracted. Learners become reluctant to participate in learning activities and lessons lack clarity or focus. On occasions, teachers fail to correct spelling mistakes made by learners during lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations of learners, and most create an environment beneficial to learning. Learners successfully develop skills relevant to business, such as teamwork, communication and entrepreneurship. Most work produced by learners is of a high standard, including the use of business English, reflecting the deliberate drive by teachers to encourage the use of appropriate English within business environments.
- Workplace learners and apprentices develop good workplace skills. Assessors are flexible when arranging visits to workplaces, and respond well to the changing needs of learners and employers due to everyday business demands. Visits to employers for college-based learners

are highly effective in enthusing learners and helping them to prepare for work placement activities.

- The use of technology to support both learning and assessment is good. Teachers in college make good use of technology to bring real business issues into the classroom, enriching the learners' experience. Learners make effective use of resources on the college virtual learning environment, and are encouraged to use independent learning skills by researching web links suggested by teachers.
- Learners benefit from a range of effective support activities. In tutorials, teachers provide clear guidance, often through targeted feedback. Employers provide good support and mentoring for learners in the workplace. Staff support current apprentices at risk of underachievement much more quickly than previously, and this has contributed significantly to their better progress towards their qualification.
- Staff use initial assessment of mathematical, English and ICT skills appropriately to inform course choice and suitability for employment. In some cases, staff encourage learners to continue to a higher level of functional skills than required by their qualification framework in order to improve their skill level.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well through effective lesson planning, which focuses on improving learners' understanding. Teachers are highly skilled in identifying inappropriate behaviour or comments from learners, and using them to generate good discussions; this effectively raises learners' awareness, thus promoting respect amongst learners. Most staff are good role models for learners, demonstrating high levels of respect for learners and each other at all times.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspections of Lewisham and Southwark Colleges, and their merger to create LeSoCo, in August 2012, good leadership has provided a secure basis for future development and improvement. Much has been achieved in the first year of merger and the key areas of progress, identified at the previous inspection of Lewisham College, have continued within LeSoCo.
- A clear and coherent strategy for the future development of LeSoCo is in place, and is understood by staff. The college's finances, originally problematic, are now sound and have allowed significant investment in estate, resources and quality improvement.
- The merger of the two colleges, one of which had been judged inadequate by Ofsted, and the other satisfactory, has been managed particularly well. Senior leaders have skilfully integrated continuing organisational change within the process of merger, and, by including full recognition of the potential of each college, have helped to make a difficult transition more manageable.
- The governors, with a diverse membership from the two previous colleges, have worked closely with the Principal to ensure that LeSoCo's vision has not been neglected. Governors work with senior managers to facilitate key management and organisational changes and have worked hard to ensure that investment in quality improvement remains a priority.
- Quality and performance were previously poor in many areas of the work of the two colleges. Curriculum managers are now at the heart of quality improvement and are improving their capacity to manage. They are increasingly able to identify areas of weakness and to implement actions for improvement, as in business and teacher training for example. Teachers' capacity to improve their teaching, learning and assessment is supported by extensive and valuable staff development and the positive coaching programme, although it is recognised that more needs to be done.
- In spite of these advances, management actions to bring about improvement are not sufficiently effective across the college. Overall college success rates for 2012/13 improved to

around the national average; but outcomes for learners still require improvement, as they remain low for long courses at advanced level, for apprenticeships and for functional skills courses.

- Whilst inspectors identified some good teaching, learning and assessment, they also found much that required improvement, where efforts to improve teachers' performance had not yet been successful. The new arrangements for learners' tutorials are not yet effective, and the recent strategy to improve the very poor quality of foundation English and mathematics has not resulted in improvements. The provision for engineering is inadequate.
- The college's arrangements for the self-assessment of its own strengths and areas for improvement are not yet fully reliable. For example, inspectors found the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to be poorer than indicated by the college's own observations, both within a significant number of subject areas and for the college overall.
- Curriculum self-assessments vary considerably in their quality and too many fail to take account of the significance of teaching, learning and assessment in their grading. The self-assessment reports of the college's partner subcontractors are of particularly mixed quality.
- The college's curriculum is well matched to the needs of its learners and employers, and its priorities of employability, enterprise and entrepreneurialism reflect an excellent understanding of what will best facilitate the progression of learners. However, in engineering, the development of employability skills for learners and their progression to employment are poor.
- The college makes an excellent contribution to the development of learning and skills, and other social and economic themes, within its local communities. An extensive range of strategic and operational partnerships significantly benefits learners. The college has been particularly successful in working with the local 14 to 19 partnerships to reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training.
- Significant aspects of the college's work are delivered by subcontracting partners. Areas for improvement are identified and included in the college's development plan.
- Learners work in an inclusive, welcoming and positive learning environment, which celebrates the diversity of its learners. A strong infrastructure for securing the understanding and promotion of equality and diversity is in place. Learners' views are eagerly sought and responded to, and learners value these opportunities to provide feedback. However, the extent to which equality and diversity are promoted in the classroom varies too much.
- Very thorough safeguarding arrangements for learners are rigorously implemented. Learners feel safe and very well supported in their studies. The college does what it feels is needed for the safety of its learners and exceeds basic legal and government requirements in its arrangements.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

LeSoCo

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering	4
Building services	3
Construction crafts	3
Teaching and lecturing	2
Training to provide classroom support	2
English for speakers of other languages	2
Independent living and leisure skills	2
Foundation mathematics	4
Foundation English	4
Administration	2
Business management	2

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college							
Age range of learners	14+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 4,091							
	Part-time: 13,527							
Principal/CEO	Maxine Room							
Date of previous inspection	New provision							
Website address	www.lesoco.ac.uk							
Provider 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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	923	63	836	296	687	442	-	-
Part-time	-	2,401	-	1,781	-	269	-	-
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	72	1096	7	1,301	-	-	-	16
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	81							
Part-time	163							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	639							
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"> ■ Impress Training Limited ■ Inn Training Limited ■ Knights Group ■ Lifetime Training Group Limited ■ Myrrh Limited ■ National Consortium of Colleges ■ Nordic Pioneer Limited ■ Quest training South East Limited ■ Skills training UK Limited ■ Training Event Safety Solutions 							

Contextual information

LeSoCo was formed in August 2012 following the merger of Lewisham College and Southwark College. The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation in 2010 places Southwark 25th and Lewisham 16th out of 354 local authorities, showing high levels of deprivation. Both boroughs are ethnically very diverse, and a significant proportion of learners are from minority ethnic communities. The proportion of young people who are not in employment or training is lower than in other areas in London. The college provides a strongly vocational curriculum, and has an increasing emphasis on preparing learners for employment and 'creating successful futures'. The college operates in a highly competitive environment in which many learners travel to colleges outside their home boroughs.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Joyce Deere HMI
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Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and eight additional inspectors, assisted by the assistant principal for quality and improvement 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 provider. 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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