

# LeSoCo

## Follow up re-inspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 130415

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**Type of provider:** General further education college

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## Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

### Context and focus of visit

LeSoCo was formed in August 2012, following the merger of Lewisham College and Southwark College. The college provides a broad, vocational curriculum with an increasing focus on preparing learners for employment. At the time of the monitoring visit, around 17,000 learners were enrolled.

The college was last inspected in November 2013, when it was judged inadequate overall. This is the second re-inspection monitoring visit to LeSoCo, following publication of the inspection report on 9 January 2014.

The purpose of this visit was to establish what progress the college has made to improve provision for learners, following the previous inspection. The themes outlined below summarise three of the main areas for improvement identified by the inspection of November 2013.

### Themes

#### **What progress is the college making to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and to increase learners' attendance rates and punctuality?**

The college has not kept to a timely lesson observation schedule. While the college aims to re-observe teachers receiving a 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' grade within six weeks, this is not happening for a significant minority, and some re-observations pre-date the current academic year. In addition, teachers in subject areas graded inadequate at the time of inspection have not had a recent graded observation and/or a tailored development plan to improve their teaching. The college has yet to implement plans for an annual staff profiler to prioritise which aspects of provision should be observed and improved, and thereby rapidly enhance the learners' experience and improve their outcomes.

Staff now routinely carry out joint observations to assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessments and this has led to a sharing of good practice. However, records of a few of these lesson observations lack action plans to help the teacher improve any weaknesses identified.

The college continues to devote time to improve teaching practice through coaching and professional development. For example, engineering and construction managers now make effective use of 'learning walks' to ascertain the impact of recent training. Teachers are making progress in a number of areas, include the explicit development of English and mathematics skills in vocational lessons, developing active learning at the start of lessons and questioning more effectively to check and consolidate learning. Managers recognise more work is required to plan robust learning that is tailored to individual learners' needs, ensure the information gained from initial

diagnostic assessment is used effectively to shape teaching, and linking the discrete teaching of English and mathematics with vocational learning.

Managers have removed some of the operational barriers that were hindering good attendance and punctuality and many staff are now adhering to the college policy on attendance; reinforcing to learners industry's expectations of prompt time keeping, for example, through timed activities in practical lessons linked to wages or invoices for clients. However, attendance remains below the college's target and is low in English and mathematics lessons. Teachers and tutors do not deal with poor punctuality in a consistent manner, and many learners display a casual attitude to their learning by not arriving ready to learn.

The last inspection reported that too few apprentices achieve their qualifications and complete their programmes within the expected time. Record keeping and tracking have been poor and assessor visits infrequent. Management has undertaken much work to establish the actual position of learners still on programme, taking steps to ensure current learners will gain their qualification. Nonetheless, progress to date to improve accountability for under performance has been insufficient to enable more learners to complete in a timely manner.

### **Insufficient improvement for learners.**

#### **What progress is the college making to improve the quality of provision in English and mathematics?**

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Foundation English and mathematics was judged to be inadequate at the previous inspection. College staff place a high priority on supporting teachers in these subjects, particularly those who were not performing well. The number of permanent staff teaching English and mathematics has increased, further strengthening the capacity of the department to improve learning.

The cross-college management of these programmes is now more rigorous and systematic, enabling better sharing of good practice among teachers and improved coordination of staff development. All teaching staff are now expected to have, or be working towards, a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics.

The promotion of English and mathematics in vocational lessons is now a clearly established priority in every curriculum area. The outcomes of diagnostic assessments in English and mathematics are now better informing tasks and activities, but they are still not used consistently well to inform individual learning plans in vocational lessons. Better use is now being made of learning materials in discrete English and mathematics lessons. Following the results of mid-year assessments in English and mathematics, more groups now contain learners working at similar levels.

### **Reasonable improvement for learners.**

**What progress is the college making to strengthen tutorial arrangements?**

The last inspection highlighted the need to strengthen tutorial arrangements. The college's post-inspection action plan identifies, as a strategic priority, the need to improve the consistency and quality of individual and group tutorials and set appropriately challenging targets for learners. Many learners testify to the strong support they currently receive from their personal and subject tutors, but too many tutorial sessions have low attendance. Not all learners are receiving timely help to apply for university or are supported fully in their onward career or study intentions.

Learners' progress is still not monitored with sufficient diligence. Too few learners have appropriate, specific and measurable personal and subject targets. Timespans set to achieve targets are often too long, and progress towards these targets checked infrequently. Electronic systems for ensuring that this is done thoroughly are in place, but college managers agree that more work is required to make full use of their potential.

**Insufficient improvement for learners.**

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