

Long Road Sixth Form College

Sixth-form college

Inspection dates

24–27 January 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- A good standard of teaching, learning and assessment in the large majority of subjects enables the large majority of students to achieve their qualifications and make good progress.
- Almost all students progress to a positive destination on completion of their programme, including university, apprenticeships and employment.
- Teachers deploy effective questioning techniques to check and extend students' understanding of theoretical concepts and practical applications well.
- Teachers monitor and review academic targets with students through regular 'learning conversations', which ensure that students make the progress expected of them.
- Teachers, classroom support staff and progress coaches provide effective support that enables students who require additional help to make good progress and achieve their qualifications.
- Most students benefit from a broad range of enrichment activities that enhance their personal and social development.
- Leaders provide a broad and flexible curriculum that is responsive to both the ambitions of students and to local and regional employment priorities.
- Students are very respectful towards each other and staff and demonstrate a good understanding of multicultural life in modern Britain.
- The proportion of students studying AS- and A-level mathematics who are successful is too low and too many do not achieve or make the progress of which they are capable.
- Too many students arrive late for their lessons at the start of the college day.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Long Road Sixth Form College is a large sixth-form college situated on the outskirts and to the south of the city of Cambridge. At the time of the inspection, around 2,100 students were studying at the college. Most are under the age of 19 and are enrolled on courses at level 3, studying AS- and A-levels and applied vocational qualifications. A small minority of students are enrolled on level 2 qualifications.
- Cambridge has a fast-growing economy and low levels of unemployment, although there are pockets of deprivation within the city and the surrounding rural areas. The proportion of pupils from schools from which the college recruits its students and who achieve five GCSE qualifications at grades A*–C, including English and mathematics, is just below the national average.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve rapidly the quality of teaching, learning and assessment on level 3 mathematics courses in order for students to make good progress and achieve to the best of their abilities.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the few subject areas where performance is not yet at a sufficiently high standard by ensuring that:
 - leaders and managers improve the performance of the minority of teachers who do not enable students to achieve the high grades of which they are capable
 - teachers plan a broad range of tasks and activities that meet the different needs of students and that challenge them effectively to realise their potential.
- Ensure that all students arrive on time for their lessons at the start of the college day, so that students are better prepared for their next steps and the world of work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, leaders and governors have established a highly inclusive and supportive college environment. Most teachers demonstrate high aspirations for their students and a large majority make at least the progress expected of them and achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders have overseen the development of a flexible curriculum that enables students to study a very broad range of subjects. Leaders respond well to the requirements of local and regional employers and have developed close links with relevant industries. As a result, leaders have established applied vocational programmes in computer science and design technology as part of the curriculum.
- Leaders and managers implement the requirements of the study programme effectively. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that students improve their understanding of the world of work and the demands of employers through a broad range of work-related learning activities. Students receive highly effective and impartial information, advice and guidance to ensure that their experience prepares them for further study or the world of work.
- Leaders' and governors' judgements in the self-assessment report are largely accurate and used to inform clearly planned actions to improve the quality of provision. Leaders have, in the vast majority of areas, been successful in making the required improvements. As a result, there has been an improvement in the overall quality of provision and in the outcomes for students since the previous inspection.
- Managers monitor effectively the impact of teaching, learning and assessment. They provide appropriate action plans and resources for teachers to enable them to improve their teaching practice. For example, teaching and learning coaches work alongside teachers and provide high-quality support in order for them to improve their performance. However, performance management is underdeveloped at both individual staff member and course level. Targets set are not always specific or challenging enough to secure rapid improvements in performance, for example on mathematics courses.
- Leaders' and governors' effective promotion of tolerance and respect is reflected well in students' positive attitudes and behaviours. Leaders, managers, teachers and staff ensure that learners have a good understanding of British values and the diverse world in which they live. Most students enjoy their studies and work hard to achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers review the progress and achievement of different groups of students effectively. For example, leaders' monitoring of the progress made by students in receipt of a bursary or free meals has led to improvements in the learning support they receive. As a result, the achievement gaps between these groups and other students are declining. However, leaders do not set sufficiently clear targets and monitor performance rigorously enough in the few subjects where achievement gaps continue to exist.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are good. Governors employ their extensive business, educational, financial and legal skills, and expertise to challenge and support effectively senior leaders on all aspects of performance. They have a good understanding of their college and the quality of provision across the teaching, learning and assessment of the different subjects.
- Governors and leaders have managed thoroughly and secured successfully the financial stability of the college. They are engaged purposefully in discussions regarding the future direction of the college and are considering carefully a pertinent range of possible options to secure the best provision for their students.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers and staff follow through all safeguarding concerns appropriately to full resolution. They have established productive working relationships with local authority social care services and relevant support services; as a result, support for students, including on-site confidential counselling, is effective. Students feel safe and are safe.
- Managers maintain accurate records and conduct frequent checks to ensure the suitability of all staff through their safe recruitment and monitoring processes.
- Leaders ensure that all staff participate in and receive good training and receive frequent updates on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty on a regular basis.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The large majority of teachers have high expectations for their students; they plan their lessons well and consequently the large majority of students make good progress, produce work to a high standard and enjoy their time at the college. However, a few teachers do not plan routinely activities to meet the different abilities of students, resulting in a small minority of students failing to make sufficient progress.
- Most students gain good independent study skills and further their learning by accessing regularly high-quality resources in college learning centres and student areas. Leaders provide extensive resources and areas for self-directed study, which students use frequently between classes to undertake research or work on assignments. For example, dedicated, well-staffed, quiet study areas provide students with purposeful environments in which to work and access high-quality resources on the virtual learning environment.
- The large majority of teachers employ effective questioning techniques to check and extend students' understanding of theoretical concepts and practical applications. For example, in a computer science lesson, students utilised Dijkstra's algorithm to calculate accurately the shortest route between nodes in a computer program. However, teachers in a minority of lessons do not enable their students to consider, justify or explain their answers sufficiently and as a result, these learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The large majority of teachers use target-setting effectively to enable students to make

good progress against precise, measurable and challenging targets. These teachers monitor and review academic targets with students through regular 'learning conversations', which ensure that students make at least the progress expected of them. Progress coaches set and review pastoral targets for students; however, for a small minority of students, these targets are often too generic and not sufficiently challenging. For example, too many targets set do not have clear timescales for completion.

- Teachers and staff support students well. Students requiring additional help make good progress on their own without having work done for them and steadily reduce their need for support. They become more confident and as a result, contribute well in discussions and improve their written theory work. For example, teachers provide valuable additional support to enable students to learn concepts and principles proficiently through teaching adeptly a broad range of mnemonic techniques to enhance students' recall skills.
- The majority of teachers facilitate the large majority of students to improve their written and spoken English skills effectively. They place a keen emphasis on spelling, structure, composition and grammar. Consequently, the standard of the large majority of students' spelling and punctuation is good and their written work is frequently of a high standard. However, a minority of teachers do not promote the importance of sentence structure and effective use of paragraphs, and do not identify punctuation and spelling errors; as a result, a small minority of students do not improve their English skills sufficiently.
- The teaching and promotion of mathematical skills require improvement. Too many teachers of discrete mathematics courses do not challenge their students to accelerate their problem-solving and reasoning skills sufficiently. Too many students are not proficient in applying approaches and techniques to solve problems involving statistics, geometry and algebra for the stage of their course. Teachers of other subjects do not promote students' application of mathematics in their subjects or understanding of its value in the world of work. Consequently, a majority of students do not improve their mathematical skills sufficiently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The vast majority of students are motivated to learn and take pride in their work, and display a positive attitude to their studies and future aspirations. Students say that they feel safe while attending the college. Students are very respectful towards each other and staff members. They demonstrate good tolerance of different cultures and life in modern Britain. For example, a student-led lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) group enables new LGBT students to meet, discuss their identities and support each other at the college.
- Leaders and teachers promote well the importance of British values and democracy. For example, leaders have implemented an initiative to ensure that all students at the college have registered on the electoral role as part of the enrolment process. As a result, a large majority of students have voted in local, regional and national elections. A recent visit to the college by the government minister for the constitution enabled politics students to provide a confident and well-informed presentation on the importance of young voters and their influence on the direction of government.
- Students' attendance is good. They arrive prepared to work and apply themselves to their studies well. However, punctuality at the start of the college day is too variable and too

many students arrive late; their poor punctuality is not challenged effectively by teachers.

- A large proportion of students take part in a very wide range of enrichment activities, which helps them improve their personal and social skills. For example, students have established a high-profile college enterprise group to support local charities and local needs in the community. Almost all students take part in educational visits and attend internal events with a broad range of guest speakers from industry, sports and the arts.
- Students studying applied vocational subjects gain high-quality practical skills and knowledge. For example, students studying photography at level 3 demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm in detailing their knowledge of the subject matter, and work well together to produce good-quality work. Design technology students produce high-quality design portfolios and architectural models as part of their assignment work.
- Students benefit from very good information, advice and guidance prior to joining the college and at the start of their programmes; as a result, this enables them to select appropriate qualifications aligned to their career aspirations. Consequently, in 2015/16, most students progressed from AS- to A-level and a large majority studying courses at level 2 progressed to a level 3 programme.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The large majority of students make good progress and achieve their qualifications. Leaders' data indicates that the proportion of students who complete their programmes successfully has increased over time and is in line with similar providers nationally.
 - The large majority of students taking A-level and applied vocational programmes make the expected progress from their starting points, particularly those studying physical education, Spanish and media, who make good progress. In a minority of subjects such as mathematics and computing, too many students do not achieve their qualification or gain the high grades of which they are capable.
 - The large majority of students attending the college with low GCSE grades in English achieve A*–C grades at the first attempt. The proportion of students who achieve high grades in GCSE English is significantly higher than at similar providers. While the proportion who achieve A*–C grade passes in mathematics is lower, it is still significantly above that of similar colleges.
 - Almost all students progress to higher or further education, apprenticeships or employment on completion of their programmes. A very large majority of students studying at level 3 progress to study full time in their second year at the college. A majority of students studying at level 2 progress to a level 3 programme at the college. A smaller proportion of students move on to study with other education providers, secure purposeful employment or advance to take up apprenticeships.
- Students produce work to a high standard; their notes and drawings are clear and inform assignment work effectively. Teachers encourage students to check their own work

frequently and provide effective guidance on how they could improve it further. Students employ confidently a broad range of techniques, including storyboards, essay spider diagrams and mnemonics of technical language to consolidate their understanding and skills development.

- Leaders have been effective in reducing most of the achievement gaps between different groups of students. However, a few still remain. For example, in 2015/16, the achievement of high grades for male students studying level 3 applied vocational programmes was significantly lower than for females; those in receipt of free meals or a bursary performed less well on AS-level and level 3 applied programmes than their peers.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130616
Type of provider	Sixth-form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,147
Principal	Christine Sherwin
Telephone number	01223 507400
Website	www.longroad.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	0	288	0	1,859	4	8	2
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 traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	1							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	8							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, as nominee. 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 within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Steve Hunsley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ken Merry	Her Majesty's Inspector
Darrell Bate	Ofsted Inspector
John Berry	Ofsted Inspector

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