

London South East Colleges

General further education college

Inspection dates 19–22 March 2019

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good	Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not p	reviously inspected

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Senior leaders and governors have managed the merger of the former Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich colleges successfully, and raised standards across the college.
- Leaders and managers make very good use of their employer and community links to help shape the curriculum and benefit learners.
- The vast majority of study programme learners and adult learners achieve their vocational qualifications. A high proportion of learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes, and learners on level 1 and level 3 programmes, achieve their qualifications.
- Programmes for learners in receipt of highneeds funding are outstanding. Learners achieve their qualifications and develop a very good range of skills that prepare them extremely well for employment and independent living.
- Teachers benefit from a very good range of continuing professional development and training initiatives to raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which is good.
- Most teachers have high expectations and plan and teach lessons that engage and motivate learners to make good progress.

- Learners on study programmes and apprenticeships and those for whom the college receive high-needs funding develop good mathematical skills in their vocational subjects.
- Learners enjoy a good range of enrichment activities. The 'career advantage' programme helps learners to develop their work-related skills and prepares them effectively for employment.
- Learners and apprentices have high levels of respect and behave very well. They enjoy attending college and have high aspirations for what they can achieve.
- Too few apprentices, particularly in plumbing and electrotechnical, achieve their qualifications within the planned timescale. Staff do not support these apprentices well enough to make good progress.
- The proportion of learners who achieve grades 9 to 4 in GCSE English is too low, as is the proportion of learners who achieve functional skills qualifications at level 2 in mathematics and English.
- Learners' attendance in English and mathematics lessons is too low.



Full report

Information about the provider

- London South East Colleges (LSEC), established in 2016 as a result of the merger between Bromley College of Further and Higher Education, Greenwich Community College and Bexley College, is a large general further education college. The college attracts learners from across south-east London, with the majority coming from the prosperous borough of Bromley, the diverse borough of Bexley and the more deprived borough of Greenwich. The college offers provision at five main campuses. A large majority of study programme learners come to the college without a grade 4 or above in English and mathematics GCSE.
- The vast majority of learners study vocational qualifications across a range of subjects on 16 to 19 study programmes, adult programmes, apprenticeships and discrete programmes for learners in receipt of high-needs funding. The college works with 12 subcontractors to teach a range of short courses for adult learners, apprenticeships and 16 to 19 study programmes in performing arts.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of apprentices, particularly those on plumbing and electrotechnical apprenticeships, who achieve their qualifications in the planned timescale, by ensuring that:
 - apprentices receive frequent workplace visits and assessments that enable them to make rapid progress
 - assessors plan on- and off-the-job training effectively.
- Increase the proportion of learners aged 16 to 19 who achieve their mathematics and English qualifications or improve their GCSE grade, by ensuring that:
 - learners attend their lessons in these subjects
 - teachers plan and teach sessions that take account of each learner's prior skills and knowledge and therefore meet their individual needs.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and governors have managed the merger of the former Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich colleges successfully, to form the new London South East Colleges. Leaders and governors have established a common culture across all the campuses that puts learners central to all the college does. They have improved the quality of provision in the predecessor colleges, raised standards, and increased the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications.
- Learners and local stakeholders confirm that the college fulfils its mission, set by governors and senior leaders, to provide the skills needed for jobs in the region. Teachers rightly describe how the college functions as a catalyst for social enterprise in the area. As a result of receiving good-quality education and training, learners improve their chances of progressing to the next level of their education, or into the world of work.
- Leaders and managers have strong links with local employers. They use these links well to create work experience opportunities for learners on study programmes, and supported internships for learners who have high needs. Managers work and consult closely with local businesses to help ensure that the curriculum evolves to meet the needs of the region. For example, the college is establishing a London aerospace centre at Biggin Hill, in response to training needs in the aeronautical industry.
- Leaders and managers have effective self-evaluation and quality improvement procedures in place. They accurately identify those areas where the quality of provision requires improvement and put in place a suitable range of initiatives to help raise standards. This has had a positive impact, particularly at the Greenwich campus, where the quality of provision was very poor before the merger.
- Quality and staff performance review processes are effective. Managers review the performance of each curriculum area thoroughly and take swift action to maintain the quality of provision where necessary. Managers accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning through their lesson observations. Managers recognise that the quality of apprenticeships needs improvement.
- Leaders and managers have implemented strategies to increase the proportions of learners who achieve their functional skills in English and mathematics, and who achieve high grades in GCSEs. While these proportions have generally increased, managers recognise that they require further improvement.
- The college subcontracts a small amount of work to 12 regional training providers. This provision helps create good training opportunities for learners who might otherwise not access college-based training. Managers have a good overview of the quality of subcontracted provision. Their quality assurance of these courses is as effective as that of the college provision.
- Teachers enjoy a very good range of continuing professional development, coaching and training initiatives. Leaders have put in place a formal 'learning philosophy' to support teachers to raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, teachers have high expectations of themselves, and learners enjoy good teaching, learning and assessment.



■ The quality of accommodation and resources across the different campuses is generally good. Learners and apprentices benefit from well-equipped workshops and modern training environments. For example, in Orpington, hospitality and catering learners enjoy training in an excellent on-site restaurant. In Bexley, digital media learners access a very well-resourced multimedia space. Leaders and managers rightly recognise the need to continue investing in, and improving the quality of, the estate, particularly in Holy Hill and Greenwich.

The governance of the provider

- The governance arrangements of the college are effective. Board members represent the interests of the region and help strengthen corporate links with local employers. Board members have a broad and relevant cross-section of valuable expertise and experience. They support managers well to evaluate the strengths and areas for improvement across the campuses.
- Since the merger, the board has suitably reviewed its committee structure and updated its membership. Board members add significant value to shaping the strategic priorities of the college. They support leaders well in improving the financial status of the college. They provide good support and challenge to managers on raising the quality of provision.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Learners and apprentices feel safe and know what actions to take if they feel at risk. Managers maintain close links with local police, local authorities and businesses to help assure the well-being of learners. The designated safeguarding leads have appropriate qualifications and respond quickly when staff make safeguarding referrals. Leaders ensure that staff are suitable to work with learners and apprentices.
- In tutorials, teachers frequently explore topical issues, for example risks associated with knife crime and gang affiliation. Staff run topical training sessions to help maintain learners' well-being, such as the 'stay safe during summer' campaign. Leaders and managers implement the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty well. The vast majority of learners and apprentices know how to keep themselves safe online. They have a good understanding of the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremist behaviour.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of their learners to do well. Teachers agree aspirational targets with study programme learners, to challenge them to achieve high grades. The majority of study programme and adult learners make good progress. Learners are on track to achieve their target grades.
- Teachers use a good variety of teaching methods to motivate and engage learners and apprentices. Well-structured activities ensure that learners and apprentices enjoy their learning and take part in group discussions. Teachers use practical tasks successfully to help learners apply theory. They also make very effective use of the impressive range of digital technology available to them, both in and outside the classroom.



- Teachers know their learners and apprentices very well. They assess very effectively the skills and abilities that learners have when they start their course. They use this information to plan their lessons precisely and set very clear aims and objectives. As a result, learners and apprentices have a good understanding of what they will achieve in each session.
- Teachers have good industrial knowledge and experience in the subjects they teach. They use their expertise skilfully to ensure that learners and apprentices benefit from relevant work-related scenarios. As a result, learners and apprentices take part in projects that align accurately with industrial working practices. They understand how what they learn in lessons relates to the world of work.
- Learners and apprentices develop good skills in English during their vocational lessons. Learners on entry level and level 1 courses improve their English skills through reading aloud and using dictionaries to learn spelling and word definitions.
- The formal assessment of learners' knowledge and skills is thorough. Teachers use appropriate methods to check that learners meet the required criteria for their qualifications. Learners enjoy frequent progress reviews and have a good understanding of what they have achieved.
- The majority of learners and apprentices receive clear, helpful and detailed feedback on their work. They know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Teachers track learners' progress accurately. They quickly arrange extra support and guidance for those who fall behind.
- Learning support staff work closely with teachers to plan and provide highly effective extra help for those learners who have additional learning support needs. Staff put in place suitable support quickly and, as a result, learners stay on their programme and make good progress.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not set all learners enough challenging work to extend their knowledge and skills. In these lessons, teachers do not use questioning effectively to deepen learners' understanding. In a few lessons for adult learners, teachers dominate proceedings and do not give learners enough time to answer questions. As a result, learners have not understood or extended their knowledge sufficiently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners and apprentices behave well in classes, in the workplace and at college. They show a willingness to learn, and they respect each other and staff. The majority of learners arrive to lessons on time, enjoy their learning and aspire to do well.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of relevant work-related activities, including external trips, projects and employer talks. For example, construction learners support the refurbishment of a local theatre. Hospitality and catering learners take over the running of a prestigious restaurant on the river Thames for a day. As a result, learners develop good employment skills, such as team working and working under pressure.
- Staff work hard to secure external work experience placements for the majority of learners for whom it is suitable. Through the 'career advantage' programme, learners gain an understanding of the types of jobs available when they complete their courses. They



also realise how work experience develops essential work-related skills. In a minority of subject areas, such as electrical installation and motor vehicle, staff have not yet secured enough placements for all learners.

- Learners and apprentices benefit from highly effective careers advice before they start their course and during their time at college. The experienced careers advisers engage frequently with learners to ensure that they are on the right course and ready for their next steps. Staff give learners good support to complete their university applications. As a result, the vast majority of learners and apprentices receive good preparation for their next steps and move on to further levels of study or employment.
- Learners and apprentices develop good practical skills. For example, apprentices on dental nurse frameworks confidently take impressions for clients' dentures. Childcare apprentices support children well with singing and reading. Learners with special education needs and ESOL learners at the Greenwich campus manage a busy café successfully. Learners for whom the college receives high-needs funding gain skills in making and selling garden equipment.
- Learners and apprentices develop their mathematical skills well and use mathematical techniques accurately in relation to their studies. For example, in level 3 construction programmes, learners use calculations confidently when designing and costing a new kitchen. Apprentices on electrotechnical programmes understand formulas using Ohm's law.
- Learners and apprentices enjoy a good range of additional activities that help them understand healthy living, lifestyle choices and mental health awareness. For example, staff put together a 'national awareness' calendar which includes activities such as self-injury awareness, alcohol awareness and national fitness day.
- Learners and apprentices feel safe. They know how to raise concerns and they have a good understanding of personal safety, including online safety. The majority of learners understand the threats in their local communities. However, a small minority of adult learners do not fully understand how these threats affect their daily lives.
- Staff prepare learners well for life in modern Britain and teachers promote British values and themes related to equality and diversity effectively during tutorials and in lessons. Learners demonstrate their understanding of democracy through discussions about Brexit and how extreme views may lead to violence in society.
- Most learners and apprentices attend their lessons. Managers monitor attendance closely and have implemented effective ways to increase attendance across courses and campuses. However, attendance in mathematics and English lessons, although increasing, is still too low.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- On 16 to 19 study programmes, which account for the largest number of learners, the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications is high. Learners develop good practical and vocational skills that reflect industry standards and support them to progress to the next level of study.
- The vast majority of adult learners achieve their qualifications. Achievement rates on ESOL courses are very high. A high proportion of adult learners who complete short



courses with subcontractors develop a good range of skills and achieve their qualifications.

- Learners for whom the college receives high-needs funding and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress and achieve well. Those who undertake supported internships develop good skills that prepare them for future employment. Most other learners develop their independence skills well and progress to higher levels of study.
- The vast majority of learners at levels 1 and 3 achieve their qualifications. A high proportion at level 2 achieve vocational qualifications. However, the proportion of learners and apprentices who achieve English and mathematics level 2 functional skills qualifications requires improvement.
- Managers monitor the performance of different groups of learners closely. When they identify differences in achievement between different groups, they implement effective strategies to address them. As a result, there are no significant or consistent achievement gaps between groups of learners.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications within the agreed timescales is very low. This is particularly the case for apprentices on plumbing and electrotechnical frameworks.
- Current learners on GCSE English and mathematics courses make the progress expected of them relative to their often low starting points. However, the proportion of learners aged 16 to 19 who achieve a grade 4 or higher in English is too low.
- The vast majority of 16 to 19 study programme learners progress to employment, apprenticeships or further and higher education. However, managers do not know how well a minority of adult learners progress after completing their courses.
- The college has a very small cohort of learners on a traineeship programme. In 2017/18, the proportion of trainees who achieved their English and mathematics qualifications was too low. Too few trainees moved on to an apprenticeship, further study or into employment.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The college has approximately 4,000 learners on study programmes. The vast majority of learners follow vocational courses in construction, ESOL, engineering, business, hospitality and catering, health, childcare, science, arts, sport, information technology (IT), and digital media. Learners study at levels 1, 2 and 3. A high proportion of learners study level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Teachers use their vocational subject knowledge and extensive industrial experience very well to make learning interesting and relevant. Learners work on industry-based projects and briefs, develop good practical skills and apply theoretical concepts effectively. For example, digital media learners create three-dimensional images for games. Learners on level 2 IT courses create websites for a mobile phone company.
- Learners enjoy well-planned and individual programmes which meet the principles of the



study programme very well. Through a thorough and detailed assessment of their starting points, staff carefully plan programmes and activities to meet the needs and interests of learners. As a result, the vast majority of learners make good or expected progress.

- Teachers plan carefully a structured programme of work-related learning and external activities. Learners develop in confidence and gain a good understanding of the progression options available to them. For example, learners on performing arts courses benefit from master classes taught by students on local degree courses.
- The vast majority of learners produce work of a good or better standard. Some learners at level 2 produce work at a higher level than that needed for their course. For example, bricklayers competently build 'bullseye' walls and twisted piers, required for level 3 qualifications. Learners on childcare courses discuss inclusion in detail, and the benefits of using sign language when working with young children.
- Learners enjoy the frequent one-to-one sessions they have with their teachers. During these sessions, teachers discuss learners' progress and set and review clear and meaningful targets. Learners have a good understanding of the progress they make and find these sessions motivating.
- Teachers support learners very effectively to understand technical terminology and complex explanations in their subjects. This is particularly strong in science, legal secretarial, travel, performing arts and beauty courses. In these subjects, learners have a very good understanding of the technical language used in the sectors.
- Teachers create very inclusive learning environments. They support learners who have disabilities very well. This enables them to take part in all the activities, and to take on extra responsibility within the class. For example, learners who have hearing impairments support their peers by taking notes for the whole group. Other learners, in workshop sessions, give technical support to their peers.
- In too many English and mathematics functional skills lessons, teachers do not plan and teach sessions that meet all learners' individual needs. As a result, learners who complete tasks quickly have to wait for their peers to catch up, and so they become bored.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not always explain tasks well enough or check learners' understanding of the topics covered. In these sessions, teachers do not review learners' written answers sufficiently, and often have to repeat instructions. As a result, learners do not understand what they have learned before they start a new task.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- The college has around 3,500 learners aged 19 or over. The majority of learners are on ESOL, English and mathematics courses. Smaller numbers join access to higher education and 16 to 19 study programmes in a variety of subject areas. The college works with nine subcontractors to teach specialist-subject short courses, employability courses and basic skills in mathematics, English and IT to approximately 1,100 learners.
- Leaders plan and design the adult programmes carefully and effectively to ensure they meet the needs of the community and adult learners. Managers develop strong partnerships with subcontractors and Jobcentre Plus. These enable them to provide a range of programmes that support adult learners who might not normally access training



to develop their skills and achieve qualifications.

- Teachers support learners very effectively in lessons to develop the practical and work-related skills they need to move into work. For example, learners on beauty courses model good, practical, industry-related skills in the well-equipped salons. Learners on level 3 legal secretarial courses display good professional behaviours and confidence in using business language. They improve their touch typing and proofreading skills. Learners on level 4 counselling courses confidently assess their own practice.
- Teachers on adult programmes use the opportunities to share good practice with each other frequently to help develop learners' skills. For example, teaches on beauty courses developed an effective strategy to improve learners' understanding of industry-related terminology. They shared the techniques with teachers on plumbing courses, who then implemented the same strategy for their learners.
- Learners on functional skills English and mathematics courses enjoy well-planned lessons that meet their individual needs. For example, in mathematics classes, learners work together in carefully arranged groups, in which they share the same difficulties. As a result, they solve problems together and improve their individual weaknesses.
- Learners enjoy a flexible approach to learning which enables them to stay in education. Managers and teachers take account of the personal barriers many learners face, particularly those with childcare commitments, or those who are working part-time. They adjust timetables and provide good opportunities for learners to access resources through the college online platform.
- Teachers track the progress that learners make closely and use one-to-one sessions to support learners who fall behind with their work. The vast majority of learners make good and expected progress. However, in access to higher education courses, too many learners make slow progress.

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- The college has approximately 1,160 apprentices, of whom 634 are aged 16 to 18. There are 689 at advanced level, 425 at intermediate level and 46 taking a higher level apprenticeship. The majority of apprentices study engineering and construction programmes. Smaller numbers study a variety of other subjects. The majority of apprentices are on apprenticeship frameworks and 273 apprentices are on apprenticeship standards.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications in the planned timescale is too low and decreased significantly in 2017/18. In plumbing and electrotechnical programmes, staff allowed too many apprentices to pass their planned completion time. This was because of infrequent progress reviews and workplace assessments. These apprentices, although now making progress, have not had frequent and effective reviews to support them to achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers are correct to recognise the need for improvement. They have made effective changes in the management of the programmes. They entered into a partnership with a provider to support the plumbing and electrotechnical apprentices. The introduction of improved management systems and procedures to track apprentices' progress provides managers and assessors with useful information. However, it is too



early to judge the full impact of these changes.

- Leaders and managers accurately identify the weaknesses in the coordination of on- and off-the-job training for the apprentices on plumbing and electrotechnical programmes. They have implemented appropriate measures to make swift improvements. Assessors link on- and off-the-job training for the majority of apprentices on other programmes effectively.
- A minority of assessors do not set sufficiently precise targets that help apprentices develop their wider skills and behaviours. As a result, apprentices do not rapidly develop the skills and behaviours that they need to make good progress. A minority of current apprentices are not on track to achieve their qualifications.
- Apprentices develop good practical skills and produce work of a high standard. They speak proudly about the new skills they gain and how they apply them in the workplace.
- Leaders, managers and assessors work closely with local employers. This ensures that the apprenticeship programmes meet employers' needs well, and that they meet the principles of the apprenticeship programme. Employers benefit from the skills and confidence their apprentices develop. The majority of apprentices who complete their programme remain in employment.
- Assessors give apprentices on standards programmes good support to prepare them for their end-point assessment. Through frequent assessment and mock activities, apprentices gain a thorough understanding of how to achieve a merit or distinction.

Provision for learners with high needs

Outstanding

- The college supports 202 learners in receipt of high-needs funding, who have moderate to complex learning needs, in two specially designed centres at Bromley and Bexley. A further 198 learners receive support in class as they undertake vocational courses at levels 1 to 3 across the five campuses.
- Leaders, managers and staff have very high aspirations for learners at all levels. They constantly review the curriculum to develop innovative learning opportunities for learners. Leaders ensure that learners benefit from the best specialist equipment and experienced staff. The college very recently won a prestigious national award for celebrating excellence in speech, language and communication provision.
- Leaders and managers use high-needs funding in a highly effective way to provide high-quality accommodation and resources for learners. Learners frequently use an excellent range of information technology to improve their communication skills. Learners enjoy going to well-organised residential placements and using the local authority garden plot for horticultural experience.
- A highly specialist teaching and support team provides outstanding support to learners who have multiple and complex needs. Staff use a comprehensive assessment of learners' medical, behavioural, communicative and cognitive abilities at the start of the programme. They have a very clear understanding of the needs of learners and use this exceptionally well to ensure that learners make excellent progress.
- Teachers prepare learners extremely well for employment. Staff have developed excellent partnerships with employers to provide highly effective work experience placements.



Learners who have more complex needs gain good experience in the college cafes, shops, kitchens and libraries. As a result, learners develop excellent work-related skills. A high proportion of learners on supported internships gain sustained employment after completing their course.

- Learners develop excellent practical skills and produce work to a high standard. In carpentry workshops, learners make good-quality garden chairs and birdboxes, which they sell at the college shop. In horticulture, learners grow plants from seeds and produce attractive hanging baskets to sell.
- Learners on vocational courses receive highly effective in-class and individual support. Support staff make very good use of learners' education, health and care plans to ensure that the support learners receive meets their precise needs. Staff set learners very clear targets and monitor them closely. As a result, learners improve in confidence, progress to higher levels of study and overcome barriers to learning.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their learners to improve their English and mathematics. Teachers support learners effectively to do this through relevant activities, such as handling money, weighing ingredients, planning timetables, taking orders and discussing current news topics. Learners make very good progress in improving these skills.
- Through the very good range of enrichment activities, learners develop essential life skills. For example, when taking part in boardgames, dance videos and sporting activities, learners improve their thinking skills, communication and creativity. Learners take responsibility for managing their behaviour and emotions very effectively.
- Learners are highly motivated, attend their lessons and take pride in their work. Learners improve their skills to help them live independently, and their ability to make decisions effectively. As a result of the excellent teaching and support they receive, learners follow instructions precisely and work successfully with their peers.
- Learners develop an excellent understanding of health, hygiene and safe working practices. They feel very safe at college and know whom to speak to if they have concerns.



Provider details

Unique reference number 130430

Type of provider General further education college

Age range of learners 16+

Approximate number of all learners over the previous full

contract year

10,018

Principal Sam Parrett

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Website www.lsec.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		
Total number of learners	16–18	19+	16–18	3 19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	
(excluding apprenticeships)	1,437	1,853	990	1,396	1,119	378	0	58	
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		æ	Advanced		ced Hig		r	
apprenticeship level and age	16–18 19)+	16–18	19+	16-	-18	19+	
	216	216 209		410	279	8	3	38	
Number of traineeships	16–19			19+			Total		
	67			7			74		
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0								
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	400								
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Careerwise Consultancy Ltd Global Skills Training Ltd Integer Training Ltd Learning Curve Group London Skills for Growth Nationwide Energy Training Services Successful Mums CIC								



The Arsenal Football Club PLC The Skills Network Limited Theatre Street Performing Arts College Twin Training International Limited Welcome Skills Limited



Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the group executive director for academic performance, standards and customer experience, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. 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

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