

Inspection of Luton Sixth Form College

Inspection dates: 10 to 13 October 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Luton Sixth Form College (LSFC) is a sixth-form college located in the north of Luton town. The college serves a diverse community, which includes areas of high levels of deprivation. The college provides 30 A-level subjects and 48 vocational subjects, as well as qualifications such as the extended project. At the time of the inspection, 3,247 students aged 16 to 18 studied at the college. Most students were enrolled on advanced-level courses, with many studying science and mathematics. Over 200 students studied level 2 courses, and over 800 students studied English or mathematics qualifications. Twelve students were in receipt of high-needs funding. At the time of the inspection, leaders did not work with any subcontractor partners.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students value the inclusive culture at LSFC. Leaders ensure that students celebrate the diverse nature of the student body through special events like their culture day. Students treat each other with respect. Students are active citizens within Luton and the surrounding area. Many students volunteer for the local hospice and with local charities.

Students demonstrate good behaviour in teaching environments. They are polite and well mannered. Students demonstrate a mature and positive approach to their studies. They respond appropriately to teachers' questions and contribute to lessons through group activities. They collaborate with their peers and work independently as needed. Many students make good use of the catch-up sessions or additional support services.

Many students take part in a comprehensive and diverse enrichment programme. This ensures that their learning extends beyond their academic and vocational courses. Students enjoy clubs such as boxing, gardening, debating and chess. Many students study the extended project qualification. As a result of these activities, students develop confidence while at the college.

Students' attendance is not yet consistently high in a few second-year vocational courses and GCSE English and mathematics sessions. Many of these second-year students are enrolled on the college's switch programme. This is a programme where second-year level 3 students can study new one-year courses. Leaders are working diligently to improve attendance in these subjects; however, it is too early to see the full impact of this activity.

Students who receive high-needs funding feel welcomed into the college by supportive staff. These students know they can speak to their course teachers, course managers and the safeguarding team if they have any concerns. Students find it easy to transition and settle into college.

Students feel safe at college. They know how to protect themselves from extremist views. Students have a good understanding of the importance of healthy relationships. They are confident that should any incidents of bullying and harassment occur, staff will deal with any issues quickly.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders have a good awareness of the skills priorities across the region. Leaders work strategically and highly collaboratively with community and regional partners, such as Luton Borough Council, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce, South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership, local universities and colleges, and an increasing number of employers. Leaders are key contributors to Luton's Employment Skills & Partnership Board. As a result, leaders have developed a clear

student employment and skills strategy. Leaders offer a wide range of vocational courses that meet local and national employment needs. Leaders prioritise the development of students' employability skills to ensure that young people fulfil their potential in the world of work in the future.

Too few employers are sufficiently involved in the planning and design of the curriculum. As a result, too few students have a good understanding of the world of work through their curriculum. Many subjects use a good range of visiting speakers to enhance the curriculum. Criminology students improve their understanding of forensics and crime scene investigation by attending lectures from visiting police professionals. Travel and tourism students are better prepared for the industry by taking part in mock interviews with cabin crew trainers.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have created a culture of high standards and aspirations. Most staff challenge students to be the best they can be. Many students go beyond the requirements of the tasks set to strive for higher grades. As a result, at the end of their studies at LSFC, a high proportion of students progress on to employment, training or higher education.

Teachers plan their lessons carefully and sequence the order of learning to build on what students already know and can do. In A-level mathematics, teachers make sure that students have a solid grasp of basic formulae and mathematical equations. Students then move on to higher levels of mathematics, such as binomial series and trigonometric identities. On the information technology (IT) diploma, teachers develop students' presentation skills first. Students then apply this knowledge in later units, such as the presentation of databases and IT project management. As a result, students build their skills and knowledge over time.

Teachers use their specialist skills and knowledge highly effectively to help students remember what they have learned. A-level biology teachers support students effectively in applying their newly taught knowledge during practical activities. Students learn how to identify types of muscles through a microscope. They work collaboratively to map the ornithine cycle. As a result, students can talk confidently about the new knowledge and specialist skills they have obtained over time.

Teachers use assessments frequently and effectively to consolidate what students have learned and to identify any gaps in their knowledge. Teachers indicate clearly how students can improve their written and practical work further. Teachers frequently use 'recap' activities that help students recall learning or reinforce specialist vocabulary. As a result, student work is at least in line with course expectations, and much is of a high standard.

Too few students studying vocational programmes complete their courses. On level 2 health and social care, for example, too few students complete their programme,

and those who remain in learning often do not achieve. Leaders have taken decisive action to improve this course, but it is too early to see the impact.

Staff ensure that students requiring additional levels of support receive this quickly. As a result, most of these students go on to pass their courses. Support managers and staff work closely and effectively with students with high needs to trial different technologies and strategies to provide support. Students with hearing impairments trial technology such as hearing loops and microphones. Consequently, students with high needs develop independent learning skills and communication strategies that they can take forward into their future careers.

Leaders have clear and high expectations regarding the quality of teaching and learning at LSFC. Leaders have established a helpful framework that covers expectations for teaching sessions. This framework includes approaches to ensure that learning is frequently checked and revisited. Teachers make good use of professional development activities, such as sessions on retrieval practice, to improve their teaching. Most teaching is of a consistently good quality, and the overall proportion of students achieving A* to B at A level has improved.

Leaders have not ensured that students planning to enter employment receive sufficient and timely careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) to help them prepare for their next steps. A few of these students told inspectors that they are not yet aware of the full range of options available to them. Leaders do not know whether students planning to move into employment have undertaken relevant work experience. CIAG for those students planning to progress to university is highly effective. Students wishing to progress to medical schools join a scholar's programme. These students receive additional support for securing medical work experience and are supported to be successful in their applications to university.

Governors have a good mix of experience and skills to be able to support leaders effectively. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college and the challenges leaders face. Governors provide effective challenge to leaders. They challenge leaders about online IT safety and the filtering and security systems they use.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve the retention and pass rates on the few vocational courses where these are low.
- Improve student attendance in lessons, particularly GCSE English, mathematics and second-year vocational courses.

- Provide opportunities for students not planning to go to university to receive sufficient and timely CIAG to help them prepare for their next steps.
- Improve employer involvement in the design and review of programmes and qualifications.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130600
Address	Bradgers Hill Road Luton Bedfordshire LU2 7EW
Contact number	01582877500
Website	www.lutonsfc.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Altaf Hussain
Provider type	Sixth form college
Date of previous inspection	28 November to 1 December 2017
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. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Georgina Ager, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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