

Lambeth College

Inspection report

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in: Train to Gain.

Description of the provider

1. Lambeth College is a large inner city general further education college in the London Borough of Lambeth. It operates from three main centres, in Brixton, Clapham and Vauxhall. It delivers provision also in over 20 off-site venues, including community and employer premises. The college is building a dedicated sixth form centre at the Clapham centre which is due to open in September 2009. The college has a wide range of provision. In 2006/07 there were 2,515 learners aged 16-18 and 18,327 adult learners, almost equally divided between male and female learners. Some 80% attended part-time. Just over 60% of learners are from black and minority ethnic communities. In addition to learners directly funded by the LSC, the college

delivers a small amount of adult and community learning for the London Borough of Lambeth, foundation degrees funded through universities and work for local employers. The college provides a curriculum for school pupils aged 14-16 through link courses. It offers Train to Gain, has contracts with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to deliver work-based learning in construction and has just contracted to offer its own apprenticeships in construction and business administration. The college holds a range of awards, including Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status in construction, business and, in partnership with Southwark College, health.

2. The borough of Lambeth is the largest of the Inner London Boroughs. Some 40% of the population is made up of non-white ethnic communities, compared with 29% in Greater London. The largest ethnic groups are Black African and Black Caribbean, constituting nearly 25% of the local resident population. Amongst people aged 16-74, 41% hold level 4/5 qualifications, a significantly higher percentage than in London as a whole and in England and Wales. Seven of the borough's secondary schools offer post-16 provision, there is one sixth form college and the Lambeth Academy has a sixth form. A second academy is due to open in September 2008.
3. The college's mission commits it to providing excellent quality teaching and learning, promoting equality and widening participation in education, delivering high levels of learner success and meeting the skills needs of the economy.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Outstanding: Contributory Grade 1</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of provision is good. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates have improved significantly since the last inspection and overall they have risen consistently over the last three years. For most levels and ages, they are now at or above recent national averages. The improvement for learners aged 16-18, at levels 1 and 2, is particularly marked. Success rates for adults at level 1 and for learners aged 16-18 at level 3 fell back in 2006/07. Learners' success in literacy and numeracy is good. Their standards of work are satisfactory or better. Practical standards are high in engineering and construction. Learners make good progress and are particularly well prepared for work. Learners' attendance is improving, but is still too low.
5. Teaching and learning are good. Issues noted for improvement at the last inspection have been largely addressed. The college has established a comprehensive scheme for observing lessons, with rigorous moderation to ensure consistency of judgements. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgements when carrying out joint lesson observations. The proportion of good or better lessons increased significantly over the last year. The college identifies the need to reduce the proportion of lessons that are no better than satisfactory. Resources for information and learning technologies (ILT) are good and their use is increasing. The assessment of learners' work is good.
6. The college's response to educational and social inclusion and to meeting the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. The curriculum is highly responsive and inclusive, offering significant choice, progression opportunities and flexibility. The needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met well. Partnership working is highly effective.
7. The guidance and support of learners are good. Before they enrol, learners get helpful advice and while at the college, they are well cared for, supported and safe. The identification of, and provision for, additional learning needs are good. Learners benefit from excellent pastoral and specialist support. Target-setting to challenge learners is insufficiently demanding, although good practice exists, particularly for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
8. Leadership and management are good. Leaders and managers provide clear vision and strategic direction. With drive and determination they have restructured the college to respond more effectively to local and national priorities. Management at all levels is good. Management information is exceptionally well used. Quality assurance is robust and mature. The quality of some improvement plans at course team level is inconsistent. Equality of opportunity is outstanding. Governance is outstanding.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

9. The college's capacity to improve is good. The thoroughness and accuracy of the self-assessment process, including the report, are good. Quality assurance is robust and mature. The relatively new management structure is facilitating further improvement. Managers know what needs to be done to improve the quality of provision further. The college is in good financial health and has the confidence of a growing range of partners, both locally and across London. Management information is accurate and is used well to inform curriculum developments, quality improvement and strategic decisions.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

10. Good progress has been made to promote improvement since the last inspection. Managers have introduced considerable organisational change successfully. They have also initiated significant and positive accommodation changes for the college. Success rates have improved significantly and overall are now broadly satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now good. College accommodation is much more accessible to those with physical disabilities. Learners' performance data are routinely analysed by ethnicity and gender. Additional learning support is more effectively managed and flexibly delivered.

Key strengths

- highly effective leadership
- outstanding governance
- outstanding response to educational and social inclusion
- highly responsive curriculum, meeting the needs of a wide range of learners
- good development of skills for employment
- highly productive partnerships
- excellent pastoral support for learners.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- the further improvement of learners' success rates, especially for learners aged 16-18 at level 3 and adults at level 1
- increasing the proportion of lessons that are good or better
- continuing the improvement in learners' attendance
- target-setting for learners.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The college has improved success rates significantly since the last inspection, with overall rates rising consistently over the three years 2004/05 to 2006/07. For most levels and ages they are now at, and sometimes above, recent national averages.
12. Long course success rates for learners aged 16-18 improved at all levels over the last three years, and substantially so at levels 1 and 2, at 17 and 24 percentage points respectively. They improved least for the smaller number of level 3 learners, where performance in 2006/07 fell back against national averages for similar colleges, largely due to underperformance on AS courses. Data for 2007 show that for most subjects the extent of value added during learners' general certificate of education (GCE) A level courses is in line with expectations.
13. Overall success rates for adults have improved consistently over the last three years and are largely at, or above, recent national averages. At level 1 in 2006/07 they fell to just below, due to poorer English as a second or other language (ESOL) success rates, with the move to accredited qualifications. Overall success rates on short courses have stayed much the same over the last three years, at around 80%. College data indicate good overall success for learners on adult and community learning programmes.
14. Success rates for levels 1 and 2, literacy and numeracy, are now good, having improved significantly over the last three years. The overall success rate in 2006/07 was 73%, as compared with 46% in 2004/05.
15. Standards of learners' work are satisfactory or better. For example, in business, engineering and science and mathematics, assignment work is of a good standard, with learners showing a sound understanding of more complex topics. In engineering and construction, learners' practical work is of a particularly high standard. Learners enjoy their courses and often develop in confidence.
16. Learners often progress to higher level courses in the college. As local employers noted in meetings with inspectors, learners are well prepared for employment. The number of learners applying to higher education has modestly increased over the last three years, with around 70% placed.
17. Learners' attendance, at 76% in 2006/07, is steadily improving, and markedly so in some areas, but is still too low.
18. The college successfully celebrates the achievement of learners. Achievement is recognised in college publications and at various awards ceremonies.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

19. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Issues identified for improvement at the last inspection have been largely addressed. The college has established a comprehensive scheme for observing lessons, with rigorous moderation to ensure consistency of judgements. Well trained observers are accurate in their evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors agreed with their judgements when carrying out joint lesson observations. The proportion of good or better lessons increased significantly over the last year and the self-assessment report accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. This includes the need to decrease the proportion of lessons that are no better than satisfactory.
20. Lessons are well planned, with a broad range of activities to maintain learners' interest. Teachers meet the needs of individual learners well. However, differentiated tasks are sometimes missing in group work. Good use is made of realistic work environments; for example, learners' work in construction in the college's training centre at Battersea Power Station. Despite strenuous actions to improve the punctuality of learners, lateness to lessons is still an issue on some courses. Teachers of Skills for Life now work as part of vocational staff teams, ensuring that literacy and numeracy lessons are well delivered, in a vocational context.
21. The college has good resources for ILT and their use is increasing. Staff receive effective training in the use of ILT and inspectors observed some outstanding practice, for example in physics lessons. On-line learning resources are used well on some courses, but they are underdeveloped throughout the college as a whole. This is acknowledged by teachers and well developed plans are in place to implement a new virtual learning environment.
22. The assessment of learners' work is good. Several cross-college groups meet to ensure the consistency of assessment procedures. Issues raised within reports from external verifiers are acted upon promptly and actions are monitored closely by managers. Teachers moderate course work well to ensure appropriate standards. Marking is generally comprehensive and rigorous. Learners have regular individual meetings with their tutors.
23. The needs and interests of learners are met outstandingly. The curriculum is highly responsive and inclusive. It meets the needs and interests of learners very effectively, by offering choice, progression opportunities and flexibility. With provision on main sites, community venues and employers' premises, learners of all abilities have good opportunities to gain qualifications and develop skills to prepare them for work or further study. The needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met well. A range of enterprise activities, including a café and shop, help them to progress into work. The college also offers effective programmes specifically to attract young people not in education, employment or training and those with mental health difficulties.
24. Learners aged 16–19 are encouraged to undertake enrichment activities. Those who take advantage of the opportunity to work as 'student ambassadors' or

- 'peer mentors' recognise the impact this has on improving their own confidence and skills, as well as making a positive contribution to the work of the college.
25. The needs of employers are met very well. The college has been successful; for example, in its work with the security sector and also in the design and delivery of courses to train people to service medical equipment. Well established links with employers within curriculum areas are being further developed. These links contribute to developing learners' work-related skills and to professional development for staff.
 26. Other aspects of partnership working are similarly highly effective. The college plays a pivotal role; for example, in planning and supporting the significant changes to the curriculum offer over the next few years planned for local learners aged 14-19.
 27. Support and guidance for learners are good. Before they enrol, learners get helpful advice and while at the college, they are well cared for, supported and safe. The identification of, and provision for, additional learning needs are good. Where learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, need additional learning support to improve their language, literacy or numeracy skills, it is identified quickly and appropriate support is arranged. On many programmes, learners receiving additional support are more successful than those who do not.
 28. Target-setting to challenge learners to achieve to their full potential is not always of a high standard. Good practice exists, particularly for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, it fails to address the need for learners to improve subject-specific knowledge and skills.
 29. Learners benefit from excellent pastoral support from tutors as well as from specialist support from Connexions staff and the college's own careers advisors, dyslexia tutors, learning mentors and skills coaches. Looked-after children are well supported. Nursery facilities at two main sites and financial support to help with childcare arrangements are critical factors for many learners, enabling them to remain at college and gain qualifications and skills.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Outstanding: Grade 1

30. Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection the college has undergone significant organisational change, there have been changes in the leadership team, and substantial building programmes are underway. The principal, senior managers and governors provide clear vision and strategic direction well understood by all staff. With drive and determination the principal and senior managers have restructured the college to respond more effectively to local and national priorities. Management at all levels is good and lines of responsibility are clear. An ethos of hard work and commitment addresses the

wide variety of learners' needs and aspirations. Learners' overall success rates have significantly improved over three years and are now at national averages. Management information is exceptionally well used to monitor performance and raise standards.

31. Quality assurance is robust and mature. Procedures for team evaluation and review are clear and well understood. The thoroughness and accuracy of the self-assessment process are good. The self-assessment report is an accurate and highly evaluative account of the college's activities and progress. Self-assessment at curriculum team level is good, although the quality of some improvement plans at course team level is inconsistent and they do not always address key weaknesses.
32. The lesson observation system is good. Recent improvements to grading and the moderation of observation grades have led to greater rigour. The self-assessment report accurately reports that observations are regular and rigorous and have brought about improvements in the standard of teaching and learning.
33. Teachers are well qualified and a high proportion of both full- and part-time teachers have teaching qualifications. The college is on track to meet workforce reform requirements. Continuing professional development opportunities are good and valued by staff. Systems are in place to ensure the safety, protection and well-being of young people and vulnerable adults at the college.
34. Equality of opportunity is outstanding. College centres are safe places in which to work and there is a calm atmosphere throughout. Teachers promote equality and diversity in lessons very effectively and run programmes to attract all types of learners. Attractive displays and posters celebrate the pride the college and learners take in the successes achieved. Provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The college is fully accessible to those with physical disabilities and the college fully complies with the legal requirements in relation to race, equality and disability. Analysis of equality and diversity related data is good.
35. Governance is outstanding. Well informed governors have high expectations of both learners and staff. They monitor the college's performance particularly well, are well briefed and are supported by excellent clerking. Financial management is very good. The college is in a healthy financial situation and value for money is good.
36. Links with other providers, services and employers are highly effective. The college is a key partner in widening participation in education and training in Lambeth and neighbouring boroughs. The college is a lead partner with the local authority and secondary schools in developing 14-19 diplomas and in successfully providing part-time vocational courses for pupils aged 14-16.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04-05	1567	54	62	-8	4055	64	61	3
	05-06	1249	67	68	-1	3584	65	67	-2
	06-07*	1159	71			2753	62		
GNVQs and precursors	04-05	106	58	64	-6	72	57	n/a	n/a
	05-06	106	57	70	-13	68	63	n/a	n/a
	06-07	42	55			38	66		
NVQs	04-05	120	48	66	-18	101	73	71	2
	05-06	134	71	70	1	87	59	72	-13
	06-07*	164	63			82	66		
Other	04-05	1341	54	61	-7	3882	64	61	3
	05-06	1009	68	67	1	3429	65	67	-2
	06-07*	953	73			2633	62		

* college data

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	04-05	1142	49	61	-12	2573	58	60	-2
	05-06	1015	64	65	-1	2104	69	66	3
	06-07*	1058	73			2052	71		
GCSEs	04-05	373	58	66	-8	235	68	64	4
	05-06	475	66	69	-3	228	71	67	4
	06-07*	427	74			212	74		
GNVQs and precursors	04-05	89	53	67	-14	87	57	65	-8
	05-06	97	54	66	-12	75	68	65	3
	06-07*	53	57			44	43		
NVQs	04-05	77	48	56	-8	375	58	62	-4
	05-06	32	53	64	-11	285	81	69	12
	06-07*	49	61			256	81		
Other	04-05	603	43	59	-16	1876	57	58	-1
	05-06	411	64	63	1	1516	67	65	2
	06-07*	529	75			1540	70		

* college data

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04-05	781	64	66	-2	1770	64	57	7
	05-06	791	64	68	-4	1786	61	62	-1
	06-07*	853	67			1571	68		
A/A2 Levels	04-05	140	92	85	7	112	94	74	20
	05-06	135	87	86	1	74	85	74	11
	06-07*	154	86			103	85		
AS Levels	04-05	376	60	64	-4	123	65	53	12
	05-06	395	63	64	-1	112	64	57	7
	06-07*	414	62			132	64		
GNVQs and precursors	04-05	62	63	60	3	57	65	52	13
	05-06	18	67	68	-1	26	77	54	23
	06-07*	0				0			
NVQs	04-05	13	31	54	-23	258	62	55	7
	05-06	3	67	66	1	209	70	65	5
	06-07*	5	20			129	70		
Other	04-05	190	53	57	-4	1220	62	57	5
	05-06	240	53	62	-9	1365	58	62	-4
	06-07*	280	64			1207	67		

* college data

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