

Leyton Sixth Form College

Sixth form college

Inspection dates		14–17 January 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The proportion of students who complete their course successfully is high, and many move on to higher education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and all staff are committed to further improvement.
- The extensive and vibrant enrichment activities develop the personal and social skills of students well, helping them to gain in self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Students benefit from very good individual support and care from staff.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary and independent learning is promoted well.
- Students and staff enjoy and contribute to a lively college community where equality and diversity are celebrated.
- Good leadership and management have created a supportive, challenging and innovative culture that focuses well on giving students good experiences and raising standards.
- The wide range of high-quality accommodation and resources promote good learning and a secure and welcoming environment for students and staff.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Teachers' planning does not consistently ensure that lesson activities stretch and challenge all students to make the progress they are capable of.
- Standards and success rates are not consistently high for all subject areas.
- Staff do not make enough use of information and communication technology (ICT) to stimulate and enhance learning in the classroom and beyond.
- Too often, the individual targets agreed with students are not specific or measurable enough.
- Improvement plans and the procedures for improving staff performance are not yet fully effective.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to outstanding by ensuring that teachers:
 - stretch and challenge all students and fully meet their individual needs
 - do not dominate teaching sessions, and use a variety of learning tasks to engage and motivate all students
 - make full use of ICT in lessons and through the college’s virtual learning environment (VLE) to enliven and enhance learning.
- Ensure the remaining areas of underperformance in subjects are resolved rapidly, by producing clearer and more detailed action plans and implementing fully the well-designed staff performance management system.
- Raise standards and ensure all students reach their full potential by agreeing with them specific and measurable individual targets that are monitored regularly.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proportion of students who complete their course successfully is high and improving. These success rates are high for students on foundation and intermediate level programmes and broadly comparable to other sixth form colleges for advanced level students. They are above the national averages for the large minority of students on vocational courses. ▪ The majority of students take A levels and success rates are satisfactory, with a considerable increase in AS subjects in 2011/12. The success rate for GCSE mathematics is consistently good. It decreased significantly for GCSE English in 2011/12, but improved in the November 2012 examination following swift action by staff. Students’ results for functional skills courses, taken mainly in ICT, are very high. ▪ The college has a very high proportion of students of minority ethnic heritage. All ethnic groups perform as well as each other, except students of Bangladeshi heritage who, as a group, have underperformed marginally for the past two years. Students with a declared learning difficulty and/or disability benefit from strong additional support and their results are better than for other students. ▪ The progress students make is too variable. Students on vocational courses perform as well as expected. Those in performing arts attain better than expected, while students on business courses do less well. Students taking AS subjects also achieve as expected, given their prior attainment, but students in a number of A-level subjects do not do as well. ▪ The progression of students to higher-level courses is good. For example, staff monitor the destinations of students taking English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) thoroughly, and the large majority of these students complete their course successfully and progress to appropriate higher-level programmes. The college is good at raising students’ aspirations and continues to encourage and support large numbers to progress to higher education. ▪ Students greatly enjoy their time in college and particularly benefit from the extensive enrichment activities that help them to develop their personal and social skills. In conjunction with a local university, the college has developed the Queen Mary University London (QMUL) participation award which rewards good attendance, high individual achievement and participation in activities such as volunteering. In 2011/12, over 200 students gained the QMUL. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is very popular with students, who learn to work well with each other and as a team. ▪ The vibrant performing arts department regularly stages high-quality performances that also 	

involve students from other subject areas. This enables students to develop skills and experience in areas unrelated to their studies, and many gain in self-confidence and self-esteem.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The Principal, managers and teachers have a reflective and resolute approach towards improving teaching and learning, and have maintained the good overall quality reported at the last inspection. Of the subject areas looked at in detail, only English reflected the typical quality across the college. However, the others show the remaining inconsistency between subjects and this is reflected in the variations in students’ outcomes.
- In the best lessons, clear expectations are set for students and excellent participative activities help students to grasp underlying concepts rapidly. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subject and have high levels of commitment and energy. Intelligent, probing questions challenge students to provide analysis and explanation and explore alternatives ideas. Teachers plan carefully to meet the individual needs of students and develop their higher-order thinking skills.
- Students’ behaviour is exemplary. The college develops students well as independent learners through a range of strategies and techniques including research and study skills, access to quiet study areas and use of the VLE. The strong mutual respect and good relationships between staff and students are a strength of the college.
- The less effective lessons are dominated by the teacher and opportunities for collaborative learning are missed, resulting in students being too passive. Teachers pay undue attention to learning aims without linking them sufficiently to the needs of students. They fail to assess how well the understanding of students is developing.
- Many subjects have imaginative electronic resources available on the VLE that enhance and facilitate the assessment of learning. However, the VLE is underdeveloped and in too many subjects it is used mainly as a repository for course information and examination guidance materials. Similarly, not all teachers use the widely available ICT facilities to best effect.
- Equality and diversity issues are promoted well through teaching and learning in most subjects. On occasions, classroom discussion is superficial and fails to give learners a deeper understanding of cultural issues.
- The assessment of learning is good overall but inconsistent, with examples of excellent work and less effective practice. At its best, verbal and written feedback makes it clear to students how to improve their grades. In a minority of subjects, the limited feedback gives students insufficient guidance on how to raise the standard of their work. Not all teachers systematically correct spelling and grammar mistakes in written work.
- Students benefit from excellent individual support and care from teaching and support staff. However, the individual improvement targets agreed with students to help raise their attainment are not sufficiently specific and measurable. Also, staff do not always intervene swiftly enough when a student is identified as underperforming.
- When joining the college, students receive a detailed initial assessment of their literacy skills which is shared with teachers and personal tutors. The students’ skills in English and mathematics are not being developed consistently well across the college. In the better lessons new terms are explained thoroughly, but this is not always the case.
- Teaching staff appreciate the lesson observation scheme, which encourages productive and supportive discussions about teaching, learning and assessment. However, the comprehensive lesson observation reports are more descriptive than evaluative, and do not always focus clearly on what teachers need to do to improve their practice.

Mathematics

Requires improvement

Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+

- Students retaking GCSE mathematics have high levels of success that are well above the national average. The success rate for A-level mathematics is broadly in line with national levels, but for AS mathematics it has been significantly below the national average for the last three years. Students make at least the progress expected of them from their performance at GCSE. This variability in students’ outcomes is also seen in the quality of teaching and learning, which is inconsistent and requires improvement.
- The assessment of students’ work is good. Marking is detailed and informs students how they might improve. Students appreciate the regular and clear assessments they are set. They receive useful feedback every half term, which helps them to track their progress against target grades and prepares them well for examinations. Students who are progressing slowly attend additional support sessions to help them catch up.
- Teachers do not plan lessons in sufficient detail. Most commonly, teachers teach to the whole class from the front using a question and answer approach. In the more effective lessons, teachers add pace to the lesson and adapt their approach according to students’ responses. However, in too many lessons teachers do not adjust their teaching to match the different ability levels of the students.
- Students are often taught methods for solving examination questions without them knowing the underpinning theory. Teachers seldom use computer demonstrations to aid understanding, and do not give enough attention to ensuring that students use the correct mathematical terminology and layout. The VLE is underdeveloped for mathematics, and students say they use it less in mathematics than in their other subjects.
- Students receive high levels of support from teachers. This support is readily available for individual students or small groups, who can refer themselves or be referred by their teacher. When joining the college, students’ mathematical knowledge is assessed and all students undertake a two-week course to ensure they have the essential mathematical knowledge to start the course. Preparatory work is also available for students to build their mathematical skills over the summer break before their course starts.
- Students benefit from a broad range of subject-specific enrichment activities. These include talks by established mathematicians, visits to a nearby university to raise aspirations about going on to higher education, and promotion of interesting reading material beyond the syllabus. The day-to-day teaching does not place enough emphasis on the application and importance of mathematics in business and industry.
- The management of equality and diversity is a key strength of the college, and students from very wide range of heritages on mathematics courses work well together. Teaching staff promote the contribution made to the subject by mathematicians of different ethnicity. For example, they celebrate the contribution Islamic mathematicians have made in building the foundations of modern algebra.
- Teachers take into account the views of students, gained at key points in the course and at the end of some lessons. Although teachers readily share ideas to improve teaching and learning, they do not follow these up enough to embed best practice so that all students might benefit.

Sociology and psychology

Learning programmes for 16–18
Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- The number of students finishing their course successfully increased in 2011/12 and is now broadly in line with similar colleges. The progress made by students is too variable. They make good progress in AS sociology and AS psychology, very good progress in A-level psychology, but poor progress in A-level sociology. This inconsistency is also evident in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across both subjects.
- In the better lessons, students contribute their ideas well through a broad range of group and pair activities. For example, a successful psychology lesson motivated groups of students to match cards depicting different research methods. Students in a sociology revision lesson participated enthusiastically in an activity to develop examination answers, sharing their answers around groups for further expansion of evaluative arguments based on sociological evidence.
- Many teachers question students skilfully to check and extend their knowledge. For example, students’ understanding of the importance of ethics in psychological research was developed by exploring why certain pieces of research were unethical and how they could be changed to meet ethical guidelines. A minority of teachers does not question individual students directly to check and develop their understanding.
- Less effective lessons are directed too much by the teacher, so students have few opportunities for collaborative learning. Planning for individual learning is insufficient, so students lack motivation in the lesson and make limited progress. Students are not stretched and challenged sufficiently, often just copying text rather than solving problems.
- Students receive good individual support from teachers. The learning resources on the VLE support learning well, and include mind maps, hand outs and past examination papers with model answers. AS students receive good support from second year A-level students who, in turn, are mentored by former students who are now at university.
- Students often practise answering examination questions under timed conditions, using examination board schemes to mark their answers. Teachers give them good verbal feedback to help them improve their work, but written feedback is not detailed enough and often includes only a grade or a mark. Only a minority of teachers highlight and correct spelling errors, punctuation and grammar in written work.
- Sociology classrooms display a broad range of creative displays of students’ work that promote equality and diversity themes. These include Asian and Bangladeshi culture, the role of Asian and Black women in society and the effect of social class on education. Equality and diversity are covered in a minority of lessons through the use of ethnic and cultural representation in videos and visual images, but not all teachers further develop students’ understanding of equality and diversity themes.

English

Good

Learning programmes for 16–18
Learning programmes for 19+

- High-quality teaching and learning have resulted in good outcomes for AS and A-level English programmes, with all success rates at or above national averages. GCSE English outcomes were low in 2011/12, but strategies to improve these outcomes have already resulted in good improvement. Students make the progress that is expected of them in most AS courses, but less progress on A-level courses.
- Most teaching and learning are good and a significant minority is outstanding. Teachers develop the analytical skills of students well. They use collaborative tasks to explore more complex theoretical subjects, extend learning and stretch all students. Students in a language analysis lesson were challenged to relate their descriptions of language features to linguistic concepts. This supported their understanding of theoretical features in spoken and written

texts.

- Equality and diversity are promoted very well in lessons through the use of critical tasks related to language and literature. The choice of literary texts reflects the diversity of the students. For example, a book presenting a Bangladeshi interpretation of King Lear is studied in conjunction with the original text. Teachers address aspects of diversity, challenging stereotypes. Students’ work shows a high level of critical thinking around issues of gender, class and ethnicity.
- What is preventing the good lessons from being outstanding is the way teachers spend too much time leading question and answer sessions to assess learning, and dominate when leading whole group activities. In the less successful lessons, tasks are not planned well enough to meet the needs of all students and ensure that they make good progress.
- Support for students beyond lessons is outstanding. A wide range of strategies is tailored to individual needs. Students have intensive one-to-one support from their tutors and specialist mentors, and attend very effective drop-in and referral sessions where they receive targeted support. This support contributes to their progress in lessons and prepares them well for examinations.
- Feedback to students in lessons is mainly good, and more effective when students have the opportunity to work on collaborative activities. Students are set regular homework, and verbal and written feedback on their written work is frequent, precise and detailed. Students know the areas they need to work on to make further progress, although they are not always made aware of the strategies they should use.
- Students’ literacy skills are developed through teachers paying close attention to language errors, students assessing their own and each other’s work, and good use of the VLE. Students have many opportunities to develop the specific writing skills needed for their examinations.
- Enrichment activities are varied and many students participate. The activities offer students the opportunity to extend their learning and encourage them to appreciate the wider value of English for their personal development. A poetry club and involvement in the college theatre production have promoted students’ appreciation of the intrinsic value of drama and poetry.

Business, administration and law

Learning programmes for 16–18
 Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Students’ success rates are comparable to those in similar colleges. Their progress is inconsistent. Students on the vocational business course achieve better than might be expected, but business A-level students underperform. This inconsistency is reflected in the variable quality of teaching and learning.
- Much teaching and learning are good, but a significant amount requires improvement. In the better sessions, teachers use questioning well to check and extend learning. Staff support and motivate students very well. Students enjoy their work and develop good attitudes to learning.
- Too many lessons are teacher centred, often starting with teacher exposition followed by a question and answer session that does not stretch students sufficiently. Students have good access to ICT facilities and work well independently. However, teachers tend to use ICT predominantly for presentation, without using it creatively to enliven teaching and learning.
- Students’ knowledge of equality and diversity is reinforced and improved through resources and case studies, including study work books. Wall displays provide good examples of different culture, ethnicity and gender. There is no significant gap in achievement by gender or ethnicity.
- Much assessment practice is good. Effective feedback gives students clear information about how they can improve and is highly appreciated by students. However, it focuses too much on how students can pass examinations or assessments, rather than developing skills and knowledge.

- Students have the opportunity to gain useful additional qualifications and skills through a wide range of relevant enrichment activities. For instance, students are encouraged to learn foreign languages and use the skills they develop to progress in their future careers. Students receive good advice and guidance when applying to university.
- Initial assessment of students' numeracy and literacy needs is used to decide the most appropriate course, but this information is not used by teachers to inform teaching and learning styles. Mathematical skills are developed well in many sessions, such as accountancy and business analysis, but less so for English.
- Students benefit from the high-quality learning environment and resources. They enjoy coming to college and feel safe. Students receive good support for additional learning needs.
- Intermediate level students have a useful period of work experience. Advanced level students do not benefit from this, although the employability skills of students are developed in the better lessons. Overall, students do not have enough opportunities to develop team working and broader work skills.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have made many improvements since the last inspection, whilst also effectively managing the challenge of a major building programme that provides a greatly enhanced learning environment for students and staff. They have continued to develop an open, yet challenging, culture that identifies areas needing to improve and tackles them effectively. Overall success rates have increased and more detailed monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning links well to supportive and innovative staff development.
- There is still more work to be done. The self-assessment report identifies areas that still require improvement and inspectors agree with these findings. Some of the teaching and learning remain in need of improvement. The system for checking staff performance is now better, but the areas for improvement are not always identified in enough detail to enable leaders to monitor how well they have been achieved.
- Governors bring a good range of skills and expertise to their work and are well informed about the college's academic and financial performance. Their work is organised effectively and they are well supported by the clerk. They work well with the Principal, challenging and questioning appropriately. They have a good understanding of the wider role of the college in the local community and are closely involved in strategic planning. The current strategic plan has largely been implemented successfully and plans for the next three years are being prepared. The college is in good financial health and manages its finances well.
- The college is a vibrant and diverse community. A wide range of events and activities promote equality and diversity well across the college. Many of these use innovative approaches. For example, a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has been translated into the modern era and adapted to raise awareness of homophobia. Classroom displays use imaginative examples of students' work and other display items to promote awareness of equality and diversity. The requirements of students from a wide range of different faiths are well catered for. In lessons equality and diversity are often promoted, but not always sufficiently.
- The college curriculum is managed well and meets the needs of the local community. The good range of A-level subjects sits easily alongside the large, growing and successful portfolio of vocational courses. Links with local higher education institutions in some subject areas help to attract groups who may well not consider this as their natural target destination.
- Significant improvements have been made in many subject areas since the last inspection. Expressive arts, ICT, care, art and design and ESOL have all improved their success rates or kept them at a high level, improved their teaching and learning, and successfully moved into new specialist accommodation. New teachers, better accommodation, a clearer focus on improving literacy levels and close attention to the students' experience have all played their part in these improvements. Staff are fully aware of the subjects that require further

improvement and are taking appropriate actions.

- Staff development is effective and supports the improvement agenda in the college well. For example, all staff undertake a quality improvement project as part of their development programme. These projects have been of their own devising and many have led to good improvements in both the college environment and approaches to teaching and learning.
- The self-assessment report is accurate, with a good focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment and students' outcomes. Students' views are gathered using largely face-to-face meetings. Their views are listened to and responded to quickly.
- The Principal continues to demonstrate a keen interest in teaching and learning by leading on lesson observation, supplementing a three year cycle of internal inspection and observations carried out by other senior managers. Teachers have welcomed this close involvement of the Principal and the culture of openness that has been created. Some action plans intended to drive quality improvement, including some of the actions identified to improve teaching and learning, need to be clearer and implemented more effectively.
- Managers and staff ensure that the college meets its statutory requirements for the safeguarding of learners. The college campus is a secure and welcoming place. Students feel safe and adopt safe working practices. Staff identify specific concerns expressed by students well, and respond to them quickly and effectively. Staff and governors have received appropriate training. Designated staff work well with local agencies to ensure that child protection matters are dealt with effectively.
- The new accommodation and resources provide a modern and bright environment as well as excellent new specialist facilities to support subject teaching and community use. Just as importantly, the central learning areas provide easy access to computers and other resources to help students to learn independently. The new social areas are spacious and give students places in which to meet and socialise.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Leyton Sixth Form College

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Mathematics	3
Psychology and sociology	3
English	2
Business, administration and law	3

Provider details

Leyton Sixth Form College	
Type of provider	Sixth form college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,939
Principal	Kevin Watson
Date of previous inspection	May 2010
Website address	www.leyton.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 and above	
Total number of learners	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	84	6	161	3	1591	35	0	0
Part-time	28	0	2	0	26	3	0	0
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Additional socio-economic information

Leyton Sixth Form College is located in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. It has around 2,000 full-time students aged 16 to 19, drawn from some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country. The prior attainment of students is lower than in many sixth form colleges. The ethnic origin of students is extremely diverse, the predominant groups being of African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. The large majority of students study advanced courses, particularly A levels, although there is a broad range of vocational courses at all levels. The largest subject areas are science and mathematics, languages, art, and business.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Tony Noonan HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the head of quality and progression as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on students' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews to gather the views of students. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. These views are reflected throughout the report. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the college. Subject inspectors looked in detail at a sample of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics, psychology and sociology, English, and business, administration and law.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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