



# Sir George Monoux College



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## Inspection report

Audience  
Post-sixteen

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## Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Sir George Monoux College
Type of college:	Sixth Form College
Acting Principal:	John McMinn
Address of college:	Chingford Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 5AA
Telephone number:	020 8523 3544
Fax number:	020 8498 2443
Chair of governors:	Peter Leighton
Unique reference number:	130458
Name of reporting inspector:	Tony Noonan HMI
Dates of inspection:	21–25 November 2005

## Background of the organisation

1. Sir George Monoux is a sixth form college operating on a single site in the London borough of Waltham Forest. Almost all learners are aged 16 to 18 and study full-time. The college's mission is to develop year-on-year learning programmes and opportunities that promote high expectations and lead learners to achieve their full potential.
2. The college serves a wide catchment area. In 2003/04, only half of its learners came from Waltham Forest, the rest travelled from outside the borough, particularly Newham, Hackney, Haringey and Enfield. Enrolments for 2004/05 comprised 1,764 learners, of whom just 20 were aged 19 years or more. This represents a growth of approximately 20% in student numbers over the last three years. The proportion of the local community belonging to minority ethnic groups is 36%. A much higher proportion attend the college, particularly Black African (18%), Black Caribbean (12%), Pakistani (18%), Indian (7%) and Bangladeshi (5%). Females make up 53% of the college's learners. The college has a high proportion of learners living in areas with a high level of deprivation. Approximately 52% of learners are in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs).
3. In 2003/04, around 79% of full-time equivalent learners were studying at level 3, 17% at level 2 and 4% at level 1. The college offers approximately 30 subjects at advanced subsidiary level (AS level) and general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level), five level 3 vocational courses, six General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) intermediate courses, a newly established BTEC introductory certificate level 1 programme and an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programme.

## Scope of the inspection

4. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:
  - overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
  - achievements and standards
  - quality of provision
  - leadership and management.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: grade 3
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

5. Inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of provision as satisfactory. The college has a strong reputation locally and attracts learners from a diverse range of cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Many of these young people come from families with little experience of higher education (HE), yet successfully gain university places. Progress since the previous inspection, however, has not been as rapid as the college had planned. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Success rates, although comparable to similar colleges, have not improved in line with national averages and there was a decrease for learners on level 1 and 2 programmes in 2004/05.
6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The college's self assessment report identifies the strengths and weaknesses in teaching accurately, but is over-generous in its overall grading. College lesson observations are thorough. Good teaching is characterised by the high levels of subject knowledge of teachers and the professional relationships between staff and learners. Learners work hard. Poor lesson planning fails to meet the individual needs of learners in less effective sessions. Good assessment practices ensure the progress of learners is monitored adequately.
7. The college's work on social and educational inclusion is good. A broad choice of academic and vocational courses are available at level 3. Provision at levels 1 and 2 is more limited, but there are clear progression routes for learners. Uptake of enrichment activities is low.
8. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Effective admissions and induction procedures ensure learners are placed on the appropriate course. Welfare support services provide good personal and practical support for learners. Staff give freely of their time to learners outside of the classroom but tutorials are too short and often unstructured.
9. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Effective financial planning has maintained the college's sound financial position. Learning resources and accommodation are good. The provision provides satisfactory value for money. Quality assurance procedures are not robust enough and the views of learners are not incorporated systematically.

### Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: grade 3

10. The college demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve its provision for learners. Student enrolments have increased and the college is popular. Governors and staff remain very committed to the mission of the college and a

positive work ethic pervades the learners. The self assessment identifies the main strengths and weaknesses in provision, but quality assurance procedures lack rigour.

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

11. The college has made satisfactory progress in addressing areas for improvement noted in the 2002 inspection. Retention rates are generally above national averages and value added scores for AS level have improved over the past two years and are good. Success rates are generally comparable to similar colleges. Additional learning support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much improved. Learning support for literacy and information technology (IT) is well organised but learners' needs in numeracy are still not being met adequately. Arrangements are in place to share good practice across subject teams but progress is slow. The range of enrichment activities has increased but uptake by learners, particularly females, remains low. The college has put strenuous efforts into improving the punctuality of learners and limited improvement has been effected.

### Key strengths of the college

#### *Strengths*

- high success rates for many GCE A level subjects
- good subject teaching
- very good behaviour and positive work ethic of learners
- broad range of courses with suitable progression pathways
- effective financial and capital project management
- innovative projects that widen opportunities for learners and encourage high progression rates to HE.

### Areas for improvement

#### *The college should address:*

- the consistently low success rates of some courses
- teaching that fails to meet the individual needs of learners
- quality assurance procedures lacking rigour and not incorporating the views of learners
- the poor quality and management of tutorials
- insufficient monitoring and evaluation by managers.

## Main findings

### Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

12. Inspectors agreed with the college's self-assessment judgement that the achievements and standards of learners are satisfactory. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 on level 3 courses, the main provision of the college, are comparable with other sixth form colleges in disadvantaged areas. The trend of improvement, however, is less than is found nationally. Success rates for level 1 and 2 learners aged 16 to 18 decreased markedly in 2004/05 and are now below the national average. There are few significant differences in the success rates of different groups of learners, for example different ethnic groups or gender.
13. Retention rates are generally above those of similar colleges. They increased for GCE A level learners in 2004/05 compared to the previous year but are still below the national average. For AS level learners there was a small drop in 2004/05 but they are still above the national average. They have been consistently above national averages for level 1 and 2 learners. Despite strong efforts by staff to improve learners' attendance rates, they have remained largely static over the previous five years and were 84% in both 2004 and 2005.
14. Overall pass rates are generally comparable to national averages. High pass rates have been maintained consistently for many GCE subjects, but they are low in a few subjects, for example computing and art studies. The proportion of learners obtaining high grades is low, but generally reflects the level of qualifications on entry of many learners. Key skills pass rates are low.
15. Value added data for AS level subjects shows learners make significantly better progress than might be expected on the basis of their general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results and there has been a marked improvement over the past two years. Subjects in which learners have consistently performed above expectations include AS level mathematics, economics, law, philosophy and human biology, but AS level communication studies and GCE A level art and design, geography and computing have not performed well.
16. The number of learners progressing to HE has increased significantly over the past five years and the proportion of second and third year advanced learners achieving a university place was 71% in 2003/04. The general behaviour of learners is very good. They are willing and cooperative learners, with a positive work ethic.

## Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

17. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The college has identified accurately most of its teaching strengths and shortcomings, but is over-generous in its overall grading. Teaching and learning was judged to be good in the previous inspection and strategies to improve the teaching further have had only a limited impact. Teachers cover the course specifications comprehensively. They display good subject knowledge and teach their subject well. Very good professional relationships exist between teachers and learners. In most lessons the teaching fully engages the interests of learners who show a real interest and work hard on the tasks set for them. For example, in an outstanding GCE A level law lesson, the teacher's excellent subject knowledge coupled with appropriately high expectations ensured that learners made good progress and achieved high standards. Outside the classroom, good progress is being made to encourage learners to make regular use of appropriate information and learning technologies (ILT), but apart from power point presentations, insufficient use is made of ILT to promote learning.
18. Very little teaching is unsatisfactory. The most common shortcoming is a failure for lesson planning to meet the needs of individual learners. This leads to a lack of challenge for the most able learners and insufficient support to the less able. In several lessons too little opportunity was given to learners to contribute other than to listen and take notes. While most learners make a successful transition from being dependent on the teacher at the start of the course to more independent learners by its conclusion, on some courses too many learners remain overly dependent on the teacher throughout. Teaching schemes of work indicate that a wide variety of teaching strategies are used, but this is not yet the case in all subjects.
19. Good assessment practices ensure that the progress of learners is monitored adequately. Work is marked regularly and teacher feedback helps learners to improve. Learners are aware of their target grades, although tutors do not receive timely information systematically so as to ensure early and supportive intervention is provided if required. Initial assessment of learners' needs when they join the college is effective in identifying additional support needs. Communication and language support is provided for level 1 and 2 learners through workshop sessions and additional communication lessons. Learners with numeracy needs, however, do not receive targeted additional support. There is effective support for learners with physical disabilities and dyslexia.
20. The college is socially and educationally inclusive. It attracts learners from an ethnically and culturally diverse population. Staff work closely and effectively with schools and local post-16 colleges to promote and provide appropriate education and training opportunities. Learners benefit from a wide choice of academic and vocational courses at level 3. Curriculum provision at levels 1 and 2 is limited, but there are clear progression routes for learners on most vocational courses. Recently developed courses, such as Fast Forward, Step Up and Pathway to Success, enable those learners who do not take GCE A

- levels to progress to HE. Other successful initiatives, such as summer schools and master classes, are developed through the college's close collaboration with several local HE institutions. They increase self esteem and encourage learners to apply to HE. Tutors provide good support for this progression.
21. The college extends learning and progression opportunities effectively in a number of different ways. Learners on level 3 courses, for example, undertake extension studies, mainly in academic subjects. An evening CISCO course helps a small group to develop their IT skills. Additional programmes, termed 'academies', in finance and, more recently, in health and social care, develop learners' employability skills. While these academy learners benefit from good internships, work placement opportunities are not available for many other learners on vocational courses.
  22. The college is at an early stage in addressing the Every Child Matters agenda. While there have been workshops on some issues, such as drugs, sexual health and alcohol, there is no systematic promotion of a healthy lifestyle, to address the needs of all learners. The take-up of enrichment activities was judged to be a weakness at the time of the last inspection and for sport, cultural and recreational activities (particularly by female learners), it is still low. The recent appointment of a student enrichment officer is helping the college to raise the profile of this area of its work.
  23. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. Pre-course information is clear, attractive and accessible to learners. Admissions interviews allow learners to make informed choices and effective induction enables learners to settle onto courses quickly and get to know college services. Coherent learner welfare support services provide good personal, emotional and practical support. Good working arrangements between college and Connexions service staff leads to good learner support and advice. Strong links with external agencies provide access to specialist services, such as mental health services. However, the effectiveness of learner support services, including tutoring, are not monitored or evaluated.
  24. Learners speak highly of the good support they receive from subject workshops and peers. An effective study buddy scheme involves second-year learners providing academic support to first-year learners on similar programmes. Through the telebuddy scheme ex-learners now at university provide an effective telephone advice service. The tutorial system is under-resourced and poorly managed. Although tutors provide much informal help to learners, insufficient time is allocated for formal tutorials. The quality of some tutorial practice is poor. Students' attendance at tutorials is low and is not monitored by staff. Personal tutors receive insufficient supervision. Their compliance with procedures is inconsistent and, for example, progress files are not used by all staff.

## Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

25. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors, senior managers and staff have agreed a clear direction for the college through an academic strategy. The college development plan 2003-6 outlines a range of activities and projects to implement this strategy, although monitoring by senior managers is not rigorous. Staff development is well organised and relevant. Appraisals are up to date for all staff. Financial planning and management are effective and the financial position of the college is good. The college provides satisfactory value for money.
26. A wide range of innovative projects have successfully increased the learning opportunities for specific groups of learners. These projects are well managed, often by teaching staff. Other key initiatives that would benefit all learners, such as tutorials and key skills, are poorly managed. Accommodation and learning resources are good. There has been considerable investment in new accommodation and capital building projects are well managed and completed to schedule. Learning resources, including a well resourced intranet, are current and well used.
27. Quality assurance procedures lack rigour. There is no overarching framework for quality assurance across the college. Senior managers review programmes with heads of department twice a year and agree an improvement agenda, but review by course teams is informal and lacks evaluation. The views of learners and other stakeholders are not incorporated systematically into quality review. The self assessment report identified the main strengths and weaknesses in provision, but was over-generous in some of its judgements. Lesson observations are thorough, inform teacher appraisal and outcomes are analysed at departmental level. The judgements are not summarised, however, to inform the staff development programme.
28. The college is socially and educationally inclusive and promotes learning opportunities for educationally and socially disadvantaged young people successfully. Satisfactory efforts have been made to meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA). Accommodation is fully accessible for those with restricted mobility. Security has been improved and most learners feel safe at the college, both physically and emotionally. However, there is no bullying or harassment policy.
29. Staff are well qualified and representative of the ethnic mix of the community, although inspectors agree with the self assessment that those from minority ethnic backgrounds are underrepresented at management level. The achievements of learners from minority ethnic groups are monitored comprehensively. Training in diversity and race relations has been completed successfully for staff. An appropriate equal opportunities policies is in place but governors have not been trained in their legal responsibilities with regard to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The college is an active partner in

the local 14 to 19 strategy group and has good links with several HE institutions.

30. Members of the governing body are highly committed to the college and its mission. Governors are supplied with well analysed and well presented information and their knowledge of the college is extensive. However they focus mainly on GCE A level provision. The corporation has a range of sub-committees to examine the work of the college, but the academic strategy monitoring committee does not monitor progress against action plans routinely.

## Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2001/02 to 2003/04, 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	01/02	85	66	54	12	1	0	32	
	02/03	83	75	68	7	4	75	40	
	03/04	64	80	74	5	3	67	49	
GNVQs and precursors	01/02	70	61			0			
	02/03	67	78			2	50		
	03/04	51	78			1	100		
NVQs	01/02	0				0			
	02/03	0				0			
	03/04	0				0			
Other	01/02	15	87	47	40	1	0	32	
	02/03	16	63	68	-6	2	100	40	
	03/04	13	85	73	11	2	50	50	

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream Level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2001/02 to 2003/04, 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	01/02	557	44	69	-26	6	50	40	10
	02/03	618	69	71	-1	3	33	48	
	03/04	472	82	75	6	5	80	47	
GCSEs	01/02	309	20	72	-52	5	40		
	02/03	336	67	73	-6	3	33		
	03/04	180	84	77	7	4	75		
GNVQs and precursors	01/02	248	73	70	4	1	100		
	02/03	282	73	69	4	0			
	03/04	290	80	71	8	0			
NVQs	01/02	0				0			
	02/03	0				0			
	03/04	0				0		52	
Other	01/02	0				0		29	
	02/03	0		62		0		41	
	03/04	2	100	73		1	100	32	

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2001/02 to 2003/04, 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	01/02	2,807	78	71	7	53	74	49	25
	02/03	3,215	70	72	-2	47	77	53	23
	03/04	3,618	75	75	0	36	67	58	9
A/A2 levels	01/02	986	83	85	-2	33	82		
	02/03	1,148	76	88	-12	28	79		
	03/04	1,312	81	89	-7	21	62		
AS levels	01/02	1,635	75	66	9	18	56		
	02/03	1,883	68	66	1	15	87		
	03/04	2,125	71	69	2	12	67		
GNVQs and precursors	01/02	186	66	50	15	2	100		
	02/03	184	65	63	2	4	25		
	03/04	181	74	68	6	3	100		
NVQs	01/02	0				0		56	
	02/03	0				0		52	
	03/04	0				0		51	
Other	01/02	0				0		21	
	02/03	0		54		0			
	03/04	0		57		0			