

Leyton Sixth Form College

Inspection report

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Information about the provider

1. Leyton Sixth Form College is a larger than average sixth form college in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. It is one of three colleges in the borough. More than half the students travel from neighbouring boroughs, particularly Newham and Hackney. Approximately 90% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, a significantly higher proportion than in the local population. The largest groups are from Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage.
2. The local economy is dominated by small and medium-sized businesses, with the majority of workers engaged in the health and retail sectors. Waltham Forest contains some of the most deprived areas in the country. Unemployment rates are higher than the national rates or those of many other outer London boroughs. Educational attainment in the borough is below the national average with 46% of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics.
3. The college enrolls approximately 1,900 students, the vast majority of whom are full-time students aged 16 to 18, studying on advanced-level courses. Students can choose from around 35 AS or A-level subjects, as well as vocational courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. The largest numbers of enrolments are in science and mathematics, languages, literature and culture, business, administration and law and arts and media. The college also provides courses to support students in the development of their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. Students' prior attainment is often lower than that usually seen in sixth form colleges.
4. The college's mission is 'Working in a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment, which embraces diversity and promotes respect, we help students fulfil their academic potential and become thinking, questioning and caring members of society'. Inspectors drew evidence from all aspects of the college's provision. The subject areas inspected in depth were health and social care, science, information and communication technology and visual arts and media.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	48 part-time learners
Further education (16 to18)	1648 full-time learners 134 part-time learners
Foundation learning	84 full-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	65 full-time learners 3 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	5 learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	
Health and social care	2
Science	3
Information and computing technology	3
Visual arts and media	2

Overall effectiveness

5. Leyton Sixth Form College is a well-managed college which provides good quality education and care for its students. Since his appointment in January 2009, the principal has shown outstanding leadership in ensuring that all staff place teaching and learning at the heart of the college's work. This has supported the development of a very positive ethos of high expectations for staff and students. Following a difficult set of circumstances in the college, which led to a decline in success rates in 2008/09, clear improvements are now evident and staff are committed to a culture of continuing improvement. The college is focused clearly on improving AS examination results and ensuring that teachers help students to improve their literacy skills.
6. Predominantly good teaching helps students to progress well in lessons, resulting in good levels of achievement and high rates of progression to higher levels of study, training or employment. However, in a minority of lessons, the students do not make enough progress, and teachers' questioning does not

involve all students. A wide range of AS and A-level courses, and an increasing range of vocational courses, meet students' specific needs and interests well. High levels of personal support from teachers and tutors and effective working with external partners develop students' confidence and self-esteem and raise their aspirations. Students enjoy their experiences at college, finding it a safe and secure environment in which they can flourish.

7. The college has identified ten key features of outstanding provision and all staff use these to evaluate their team's progress and performance. Although curriculum area self-assessment reports and course reviews are not always sufficiently detailed, the overall college self-assessment report identifies accurately the main strengths and areas for improvement. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve further. Staff throughout the organisation share ambitious plans and targets for the future. Students are increasingly involved in decision making and contributing to improvements in the college.

Main findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Success rates have been above national averages over the last few years. Students on A-level and vocational courses make good progress and satisfactory progress on AS-level courses. The college experienced a turbulent period in 2008/09, with significant changes in the senior leadership team and major campus redevelopment. Success rates, particularly in AS-level subjects, declined last year as a result of this upheaval.
- Senior managers have taken prompt and effective action to stem this decline through a strong focus on improving teaching and learning and more rigorous monitoring of students' progress towards their target grades. Improvements are already evident in the current year with college data showing improved attendance and retention rates across the college. Pass rates for in-year external examinations in AS-level subjects have improved.
- Standards of work are good and students develop good subject and vocational skills. Well-planned and suitably demanding assignments and assessments develop students' understanding, raise aspirations and provide a reliable check on progress and knowledge. The college is aware that many students have lower than expected levels of literacy. Managers have developed a cross-college strategy to ensure that all teachers are working actively to improve students' literacy skills.
- Teaching and learning are good. College managers have implemented strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are highly supportive of new quality measures. Many teachers demonstrate a renewed pride and interest in developing their teaching practice. They share good practice widely within subject areas, and increasingly across subjects, and value well-targeted staff development activities.

- In a minority of lessons the pace of learning is too slow and teachers do not always target questions effectively to engage all students and extend their understanding. The college is revising the length of lessons for next year in response to student feedback that they find them too long.
- The wide range of courses and extensive enrichment activities meet students' needs and interests well and contribute significantly to their enjoyment of learning. Partnerships with external agencies are used well to enable students to develop personal and social skills and a strong sense of their place in the wider community.
- Students value the high quality support they receive from teachers and tutors. Staff are readily available outside lessons to provide additional support. The application of more rigorous course entry criteria and consistent monitoring of students' progress are beginning to increase the numbers of students who achieve higher grades. The college has identified this as an important area for further improvement.
- The principal's strength of leadership has galvanised staff. There is a clear focus on improving teaching and learning and raising aspirations. All staff and governors fully support this drive for improvement. Staff participated actively in devising the key priorities for the college.
- Self-assessment is broadly accurate. The college uses ten key features of outstanding practice to appraise its work. Extensive consultation with staff led to their development. This ensures a genuine sense of ownership and commitment. In subject areas, self-assessment reports, course reviews and action plans are variable in quality, sometimes lacking sufficiently detailed evaluation and clearly defined actions.
- Equality and diversity underpin all aspects of the college's work. Diversity is celebrated in many forms and the college has appropriate targets for further improvement. Promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum is imaginative. However, formal impact assessments of college policies are not fully developed. Safeguarding procedures are good and students say they feel safe and secure on the campus.

What does Leyton College need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve AS-level results, through rigorous monitoring of students' achievement and targeted support, so that all students make good progress.
- Implement the planned literacy strategy to ensure that all students benefit from appropriate literacy support to help more of them achieve higher grades.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially where lessons lack pace or teachers do not make effective use of targeted questioning to challenge all students.
- Ensure that all course reviews and curriculum area self-assessment reports are sufficiently evaluative and detailed and that action plans are more precise in order to secure further improvement.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the highly supportive teachers who are generous with their time
- the broad range of curriculum study visits and trips and the extensive range of enrichment activities
- interesting tutorials that explore a wide variety of useful topics
- the learning resource centre and library which provide good areas for quiet study
- the interesting and challenging materials on the college virtual learning environment which can be easily accessed from home
- the marking and comment on assignments which give clear guidance on ways to improve their work
- the helpful security staff who create a safe environment
- the ways that students' views are welcomed and acted upon to improve the college.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the scheduling of assignments to avoid multiple simultaneous deadlines on vocational programmes
- the length of lessons
- the numbers of computers available for student use
- the numbers of professional mentors available
- the provision of a smoking area away from the college entrance.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement Grade 2

8. The principal has achieved a rapid cultural change in the college. The relentless drive for quality improvement is supported fully by staff, students and governors. The primacy of teaching and learning in the college's work is unmistakable. The college's view of the quality of classroom practice is broadly accurate. It has worked effectively to improve teaching and learning. New lesson observation procedures promote genuine critical reflection. Governors bring a wide range of skills and provide effective support and challenge to raise aspirations and improve provision.
9. A range of new management posts provides greater capacity for change and greatly strengthens the monitoring of students' progress. The college has successfully rectified many weaknesses from the last inspection, such as increasing challenge for more able students and improving progression from AS to A-level courses. Other areas for improvement have not been fully resolved. While there have been improvements in quality assurance procedures, course reviews and curriculum area self-assessment reports vary in quality. Some reviews are too brief or insufficiently evaluative and actions in quality improvement plans are not always sufficiently precise or measurable.

Outcomes for learners Grade 2

10. Students' success rates have been above the high national averages for similar colleges between 2006 and 2008, with particularly high success rates on foundation level courses. As a result of internal problems in the college during 2008/09, overall success rates declined, largely due to a sharp drop in AS-level success rates, which fell to below average. However, success rates improved further on foundation level programmes and remained high on A-level courses.
11. Success rates on vocational courses are above average. A small minority of courses have had consistently high success rates. Several courses had 100% success rates in 2008/09, for example, the introductory diploma in health and social care, the first diploma in art and design, the national diploma for IT practitioners and A-level three-dimensional design and computing. However, a few vocational courses and a minority of AS and A-level courses had low success rates last year.
12. The college's prompt action to resolve these problems is leading to clear improvements in this current year. College data show that in-year attendance and retention rates show improvement compared to a similar point last year. Results in AS-level subjects where students sat external examinations in January 2010 also show improved achievement.
13. Students make good progress compared to their prior attainment, particularly on A-level and vocational programmes. Progress is satisfactory on AS-level

courses, and the college is focusing strongly on increasing the proportion of higher grades achieved through more consistent setting and monitoring of target grades. Students' progress during lessons is generally good and sometimes excellent.

14. There are few variations in the achievement of different groups of students by gender or ethnicity. Students from Black African and Pakistani heritage achieve as well as their peers and Bangladeshi students achieve better than the college average. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve slightly better than other students.
15. Standards of students' work are good overall. Most students develop increased confidence and significantly enhanced subject knowledge during their courses. They acquire good vocational and work-related skills through participation in regular work experience activities and industry-related trips and visits.
16. Students develop good personal and social skills through participating in varied activities in lessons, tutorials and enrichment sessions. The college has identified that many students have lower than expected levels of literacy, and key skills results, whilst around national averages overall, were below average in communication skills in 2008/09.
17. Students say that the college is a safe and secure environment where they are encouraged to achieve their potential. The majority of students progress to higher levels of study, both within the college and to higher education, training or employment. A high proportion of those who apply to higher education are successful, with many students being the first in their family to go to university.
18. Many students take on ambassador and mentor roles, and are actively engaged with the local community, for example through work with schools and the local residents group. Students report that the college takes their views seriously and acts on their ideas for improvement.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

19. Teaching and learning are good. The principal and other managers have successfully prioritised improvements in standards of teaching and learning. A well-executed, three-phase teaching and learning observation and subject quality review scheme makes a significant contribution to improving standards in lessons. In addition to the college-wide observation scheme, the principal has observed all teachers at least once during the past year. Teachers value the principal's interest in their professional practice and are highly appreciative of the detailed discussions and feedback that follow all observations.
20. A good range of staff development activities are well planned to meet needs in specific subject areas or to deal with recurrent areas for improvement identified by teaching observations. A successful and well-regarded system of collaborative 'teaching squares' provides a useful framework for identifying and sharing good practice across the college.

21. Whilst a large majority of lessons are good or better, a significant minority are no more than satisfactory. Effective planning for individualised learning is at the core of the best lessons, and teachers communicate objectives successfully to students. Successful lessons ensure all students make good progress. Students are fully engaged and contribute purposefully and frequently to discussions and other activities.
22. Teachers in the most successful lessons make effective and creative use of the college virtual learning environment (VLE) both as a source of materials and as an effective teaching tool. Other learning resources are frequently of high quality and teachers make imaginative use of them to support interesting and challenging exercises. The most skilled teachers use directed questioning effectively to challenge and stimulate, meeting the needs of all students.
23. Assessment is good in most subject areas. Teachers' feedback on assignments is detailed, encouraging and gives students clear advice about ways to improve their work. Many teachers make frequent, productive use of peer learning and support.
24. In less successful lessons, teachers make too much use of open or poorly-directed, general questioning, and not all students are involved actively in learning. In some weaker lessons teachers talk for too long and students lose focus and interest in their work. A small number of lessons observed were poorly planned and had vague objectives. The college's observations had identified the same key strengths and areas for improvement as those found by inspectors.
25. The range and breadth of provision and progression routes are good in most areas. The advanced-level curriculum is very broad with a wide choice of AS, A-level and vocational courses. The college offers an increasing range of foundation and intermediate level vocational courses which support students' progression to higher levels of study.
26. Enrichment activities are extensive and participation by students is good. The impact of participation is analysed well at college and subject level and has improved students' performance in many areas. Some enrichment activities are tailored to meet the needs of specific groups of students. Many students take extended project qualifications which are valued by university partners and help raise the aspirations of all who participate.
27. Good partnership working helps students develop mature attitudes and become active members of the local community. The college works both strategically and operationally with local partners to plan provision and has benefited from local schools' experience of the gifted and talented programme. Partnerships supporting students' health and social well-being are particularly good and highly valued by staff and students.
28. Support for students is good. Students' progress is now monitored closely, with teachers and tutors working together closely to make effective use of the new

electronic system. They review students' attendance and progress towards target grades regularly and plan actions with students to help them to improve their work and grades.

29. Learning support is effective in raising achievement. The college makes good use of information from partner schools and initial assessment to support those who need help with their literacy and numeracy, and those with a wide variety of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most teaching staff are well aware of the necessity to develop students' literacy. However, some do not check students' work with sufficient care to ensure that good standards of literacy are reinforced.
30. Most group tutorials are well planned, with interesting and relevant topics, and promote equality and diversity well. Tutors make effective use of the wide range of tutorial resources now available. The enhanced role of the senior tutor has further embedded the culture of learning and personal development, and helped raise expectations in ways that are central to the mission and ethos of the college.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

31. The principal has had a significant impact in promoting high expectations for staff and students and ensuring that teaching and learning are central to the college's work. The college is characterised by a strong sense of shared purpose, energy and focus. A restructured management team ensures that middle managers contribute fully to decision making and curriculum management is good. All staff and governors fully support the principal's relentless focus on improving teaching and learning and raising achievement.
32. Governors are closely involved in establishing the strategic direction of the college. They worked with staff and students to review the college's mission. Governors monitor financial performance closely and are fully aware of the challenges that the college faces. They provide good support to the senior team in monitoring students' performance and raising aspirations.
33. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. The college provides a safe environment and has productive links with external agencies. All staff are appropriately vetted and have received comprehensive training. Managers have completed a qualification in safer recruitment. Bullying is not tolerated. The management of health and safety is generally good and incidents are infrequent. Students' awareness of internet safety is underdeveloped.
34. Equality and diversity and tackling discrimination are at the heart of the college's mission. Managers scrutinise data to identify any group of students who may be underperforming and take remedial action. The college has reduced the difference in achievement between male and female students so that there are no significant differences in achievement between different groups of students. A wide range of celebrations, images and displays promote positive attitudes, particularly in relation to gender, disability and race.

35. Equality and diversity are promoted in the curriculum with creativity and flair. Cross-college and curriculum area action plans identify where further action is needed and progress is monitored and reported on appropriately. The profile of the staff and governors reflect that of the local area, but not the student population. A recently established equality and diversity group was instrumental in developing the college's single equality scheme. Formal impact assessments on the impact of college policies have not been fully completed.
36. Responsiveness to students is a key priority of the college. The principal meets regularly with a group of students to monitor the quality of their experience through their time at the college. Teachers seek the views of students on their courses and take action where appropriate. A range of focus groups involve students in decision making. Students are involved in the selection of new staff and the validation of the self-assessment report.
37. The college's self-assessment report is broadly accurate. The use of the ten key features of outstanding practice promotes sustained critical reflection and evaluation of performance. Achievement of objectives and the impact of actions are monitored regularly. Staff consultation initiated changes in arrangements for lesson observation. Internal quality improvement systems have been strengthened through the use of annual formal and peer lesson observations and three-yearly subject review.
38. Financial management is good and the college provides good value for money. Resources and facilities are at least adequate and in some areas very good. An extensive building programme is very near completion.

Subject areas

Health and social care

Grade 2

Context

39. The college offers courses in health, social care and child care with 137 students currently enrolled. Courses include the introductory and first diplomas in health and social care, the diploma in child care and education and an applied A level in health and social care. Over 85% of students are aged 16 to 18. A small number of adult learners study NVQ level 2 and level 3 child care courses. The vast majority of students are female and from minority ethnic heritage.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Success rates for 16- to 18-year-old students show a sustained improvement over the last three years and were well above average in 2008/09. Success rates for adults declined last year, but remained above average. Whilst overall success rates are high, students often achieve this through frequent resubmission of coursework units.
- Students develop good work-related skills, enhanced by a wide range of work placements which are highly valued by students. They make effective links between theory and practice and demonstrate their professional skills in their work. The standard of students' written work is good.
- Students apply their very good knowledge of health and well-being topics in a range of settings and understand the importance of this for service users and themselves. They take vocationally relevant additional qualifications on-line with high levels of success. Students feel safe and secure at college and the promotion of personal and professional safeguarding practices is integrated effectively into the curriculum.
- Progression rates to employment and higher education are good. A foundation degree in child care and education established in partnership with the University of East London provides good local access to higher education.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Lesson planning and classroom management are effective in promoting a positive and productive learning environment. Students communicate well, expressing ideas and opinions with confidence and maturity and support each others' learning well in peer review activities.
- Students value, and make good use of, detailed and comprehensive feedback from teachers to improve their work. Students are confident about how to improve in specific assignment areas and are set challenging targets. Initial assessment is good. It is used effectively to build on students' prior attainment and set aspirational, but achievable, targets.

- However, in a few lessons students have insufficient opportunities to engage in active learning. Lessons are often too long, particularly when students are with the same teacher all day, and progress is sometimes slow. Plans are in place to revise the timetable for next year. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used routinely for internet research and to present work professionally, but less frequently to enhance and extend learning.
- The range of courses is satisfactory. Good partnership working with a local college ensures that all students have access to an extended range of work placements in health and care. **However**, there is currently no provision for health and social care at entry level and for child care at entry and foundation level. While health and social care students progress from intermediate to the applied A-level course, no advanced vocational route is available.
- Students receive excellent standards of care, guidance and support. Students value the opportunity to attend 'drop-in' workshops, take part in regular one-to-one sessions and receive help from mentors during the first term to ease their transition into college.
- Curriculum management is good. Teams review students' progress regularly and monitor the progress of team action plans. Staff work well together to share good practice. The programme area self-assessment report is broadly accurate but is insufficiently evaluative. Course reviews do not focus sufficiently on improvements required in teaching and learning. Not all risk assessments for work placements are up to date.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Students have an excellent understanding of equality and diversity and appreciate the implications for employment and professional practice. They readily refer to equality and diversity in assignment work and discussions. Child care students produced some excellent interactive resources about different faiths to use in schools.

What does Leyton College need to do to improve further?

- Develop teaching approaches using innovative resources and methods, including ICT, to improve rates of progress and increase successful rates of completion of coursework units earlier in the year.
- Ensure that course reviews and curriculum area self-assessment are more rigorously evaluative to support further improvements.
- Provide coherent internal progression routes for students from entry to level 4 to take account of students' starting points and vocational skills.
- Ensure that all work placement risk assessments are in place and up to date.

Science

Grade 3

Context

40. The college offers AS and A-levels in applied science, biology, chemistry, physics and psychology and a first diploma in applied science, with 644 students enrolled. Just over one third of enrolments are on psychology courses, with significantly more enrolments on biology and chemistry than on physics courses. The vast majority of students are aged 16 to 18 and study full-time.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Success rates are consistently high in A-level applied science and A-level psychology. In 2008/09 success rates declined and were below average on AS-level chemistry and psychology and on AS and A-level biology. Success rates improved on A-level chemistry and were high. Success rates on other courses are in line with high national averages for similar colleges.
- The standard of students' work is good. Most students are confident and proud of what they have achieved. The standard of written work is good as is the progress in most lessons. Results of external tests taken this year indicate improving pass rates in most AS-level subjects. Students feel safe on the college campus.
- Most teaching and learning are good. In the majority of lessons, teachers encourage students to progress and support them effectively through detailed questioning and guidance. However, in a few lessons, students do not make as much progress as they could. On occasions, teachers spend too long with individual students and do not support other students sufficiently.
- Assessment is good. Much informal assessment takes place during lessons and students receive detailed feedback on written work to help them to improve. All students are set achievable targets that are monitored effectively. However, students who are falling behind do not always attend workshops set up to help them catch up, and therefore do not make as much progress as they could.
- A good range of courses is available. Many students have clearly identified their prospective careers and choose appropriate qualifications to support their aspirations. Students who do not achieve the required grades at AS level are now guided to the A-level applied science course, which meets their needs and abilities better than continuing with separate A-level sciences subjects.
- The college has a very effective programme of enrichment activities and subject specific educational visits. Master classes are run in conjunction with Queen Mary, University of London to stretch the most able students.
- Students receive good support from teachers and tutors who are readily available and willing to help them with academic or personal issues. Teachers run additional workshops which support learning effectively. Students receive good initial advice and guidance as well as support with career choices and university applications.

- Tutorials cover student safety, health and well-being. Students appreciate the very approachable security staff who patrol the campus.
- Curriculum management is good. Staff appreciate the new open culture and that their ideas are valued and they feel well supported by their managers. Regular team meetings cover all aspects of work, including the sharing of ideas and good practice, within the subject area. However, they do not benefit as much from the sharing of good practice with other areas of the college.
- The curriculum area self-assessment report is broadly accurate but too many targets set were not achieved last year. The college has completed a comprehensive external review of the quality of provision to support further improvements.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well through displays and posters, and class seating plans ensure that different groups integrate well. Managers have identified some underachievement by Pakistani males and Black females in science subjects, but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of actions taken to remedy this. Equality and diversity themes are not explicit in course handbooks and students' understanding is underdeveloped.
- Staff and students report the improvement in morale and the work ethos within the college. Some students complained of a shortage of laboratory equipment and computers. However, most students like using, and are benefiting from, the learning resources on the virtual learning environment.

What does Leyton College need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise success rates by ensuring students are placed on the most appropriate courses and encouraging students to attend the workshops and follow the revision guidance available.
- Further improve teaching and learning by sharing good practice both within the curriculum area and with colleagues from other subjects.
- Raise students' awareness of equality and diversity issues during induction and within student handbooks and regularly review their understanding of relevant issues.

Information and communication technology

Grade 3

Context

40. The college offers AS and A-level courses in ICT, computing and applied ICT, as well as vocational courses at intermediate and advanced level. Students can choose from three different vocational pathways on the national diploma course. At the time of inspection, there were 219 students, mainly aged 16 to 18, of whom three quarters are male. Nearly 90% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Success rates are consistently very high on the national diploma for IT practitioners. In 2008/09 success rates were well above average on the national certificate for IT practitioners and A2 computing, but were well below average on AS-level ICT and applied ICT courses. Retention rates were below on the first diploma for IT practitioners for the past two years, but in-year rates show improvement this year.
- Students make good progress and a high proportion achieve the higher grades on the national diploma and certificate for IT practitioners. Those on the AS-level applied ICT course do not make sufficient progress compared to their prior attainment. The standard of students' work on vocational courses is good. Externally assessed work shows improvements this year for AS-level applied ICT students.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with evidence of improvements this year. Teachers have been supported well to improve their effectiveness in class. Most lessons are planned well, with measurable learning outcomes which are assessed in most, but not all, lessons. However, in a few lessons, there is insufficient planning to meet all individual students' needs.
- In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of learning activities to interest students and use questioning effectively. In weaker lessons, students do not make sufficient progress. Students make good use of the electronic system for tracking their assignment grades and use many on-line resources well during classes. Teachers return students' work promptly, and provide constructive written feedback to aid improvement. Marking is effective in checking and supporting students' literacy skills.
- During the current campus redevelopment, the temporary computer rooms are very cramped with insufficient space for students to work on computers comfortably. Students often work for long periods with too little space to read their papers easily whilst working on the computers.
- A particularly wide range of academic and vocational courses at level 3 successfully meets students' needs and interests. On advanced-level vocational courses, students can choose between software, systems support or networking options. Many students participate in the wide range of enrichment activities

that the college offers including specialist ICT visits and conferences, cultural and outdoor activities.

- Students receive good guidance and support. Group tutorials cover interesting and relevant topics. Every student has a useful individual meeting with their tutor every week to discuss their progress.
- Leadership and management are good. The manager has set a realistic agenda for improvement and is monitoring progress and impact effectively. Staff appraisal targets are linked clearly to course performance. The strong focus on improving teaching and learning is having a positive impact on classroom practice, with many improvements made in response to students' feedback.
- The curriculum area self-assessment report identifies strengths and areas for improvement accurately, but course reviews are insufficiently evaluative. Action plans reflect improvement priorities well and are used well to monitor progress and identify the impact of actions taken.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The staff profile reflects the diversity of the local population. Despite the college's efforts to recruit more female students in this area, very few females take vocational courses in ICT.

What does Leyton College need to do to improve further?

- Share existing good practice in teaching and learning across all courses to raise success rates on underperforming courses.
- Ensure that all lesson planning explicitly identifies the needs of individual students and that all teachers adequately assess learning against the planned learning outcomes.
- Plan computer rooms in the new building to ensure that students have sufficient space to work.
- Ensure that course reviews evaluate performance more rigorously in order to secure further improvement.

Visual arts and media

Grade 2

Context

41. The college offers AS and A-levels in art and design, three-dimensional design, graphic design, textiles, photography and media, as well as vocational courses in art and design and media and the diploma in foundation studies in art and design. There are 414 students enrolled, the majority of whom are 16- to 18-year-olds studying full-time advanced-level programmes. Over 60% are female and over 80% are from minority ethnic heritage.

Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good. Success rates are high on most courses and significantly above average on the first diploma in art and design, the diploma in foundation studies in art and design and AS and A-level three-dimensional design. Success rates on AS and A-level media and A-level photography declined to just below national averages in 2008/09. Success rates on other courses are in line with national averages.
- Retention rates on the first diploma in media declined sharply in 2008/09 and were well below average, but at the time of inspection all students were still retained on the course.
- Most students make good progress, compared to their prior attainment. On many courses, the proportion that achieves the higher grades is above average. However, students on AS and A-level textiles and A-level media made less progress than expected last year.
- Students develop good practical and professional skills that enable them to produce work of a high standard. Sketchbooks contain a good range of experimental and research work, although on some art and media courses there is an over-reliance on secondary source material. Annotation and critical evaluation of work are very good in some areas, for example on the foundation diploma in art and design. But, in some other areas, annotation is more descriptive than evaluative.
- Safeguarding is good and students feel safe. They are confident that staff can respond appropriately about any concerns. Specialist health and safety procedures and practice are satisfactory.
- The ambitious and aspirational culture in the curriculum area encourages the majority of advanced level students to apply to higher education. Progression rates are good. A collaborative project with the University of the Arts, London, has been successful in securing places for students at prestigious universities.
- Teaching and learning are good and the best teaching is energetic, engaging and motivates all students. Most lessons are well planned with a wide variety of activities. Knowledgeable tutors are keen to share their skills and run additional workshops to help students to improve their work. Exemplar work is used well to inspire students and set high expectations.

- Assessment and internal verification are detailed and well documented. Individual progress is monitored closely and detailed feedback provides students with specific actions for improvement.
- A wide range of courses are available, including additional qualifications to develop specialist skills, for example in animation. Enrichment opportunities are good and include regular trips and visits to galleries and studios. Visiting professionals give advice on portfolio improvement and career information as well as running specific skills workshops.
- Teachers are sensitive to students' needs and students speak highly of the very good support they receive. Tutors provide good pastoral support as well as individual action planning for the completion of work. Additional learning support is put in place quickly where required. Specific support for a variety of learning needs is available, enabling students to develop independent learning skills. Teachers are implementing strategies effectively to improve students' literacy and extend their analytical and critical skills.
- Leadership and management are good, with effective communication and clear lines of responsibility. Staff feel well supported and involved in decision making. They support the college's emphasis on the importance of teaching and learning, and attend regularly staff development activities and share good practice. A mentor system provides good support for newly-qualified staff. Course reviews are detailed and all staff contribute to the self-assessment report which identifies strengths and areas for development accurately.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Assignments are designed to promote students' awareness of different cultures. A positive ethos has prevailed among staff and students despite the challenges of temporary accommodation until the completion of new purpose-built facilities. Specialist studios contain appropriate resources. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources are very good, with a wide range of industry standard software.

What does Leyton College need to do to improve further?

- Raise success rates on the less well performing courses to that of the best by:
 - ensuring all students make maximum use of first-hand research and experience through using primary source material where possible
 - further developing students' reflective skills so that the annotation of their work is more fully evaluative.

Information about the inspection

42. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's director of quality, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the Skills Funding Agency, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on students and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
43. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires students had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Leyton Sixth Form College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled students					
Full-time students	1,776		1,727	49	
Part-time students	147	48	82	7	10
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for students	2	2	2	2	2
How well do students achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do students attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do students progress?	2				
How well do students improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do students feel?	2				
Are students able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2				
How well do students make a positive contribution to the community?*	2				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for students?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support students receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of students?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for students?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

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