

Langdon College

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates

11–13 December 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Provision for learners with high needs	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Requires improvement	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- The work of newly appointed leaders and managers has not yet had sufficient impact on addressing all areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet of a consistently high standard across the college to ensure that all learners with complex needs make the progress of which they are capable.
- Tutors do not set sufficiently challenging targets for all learners so that they achieve their full potential.
- The arrangements to monitor, review and record the overall progress that learners make from their starting points are too complex.
- The curriculum is too narrow. It does not include a wide enough range of practical subjects to develop learners' independence and work-related skills effectively so that they are prepared sufficiently for their next steps.
- The governing body has not yet confirmed the appointment of new governors with appropriate educational backgrounds to provide further support and challenge to senior leaders.

The provider has the following strengths

- New leaders and managers have implemented a significant change in the culture of the college. This is leading to raised ambitions and expectations, and a range of quality improvements.
- Managers use the new performance management processes effectively to identify, challenge and support underperforming staff.
- Staff benefit from a wide range of staff development activities that help them to respond swiftly and effectively to the changing needs of their learners.
- Effective speech and language therapy has a positive impact on the development of learners' communication skills, behaviour and confidence.
- Behaviour is good. Staff manage skilfully the few instances of challenging behaviour, resulting in learners showing high levels of respect for each other, staff and visitors.
- Learners' awareness of how to keep themselves safe from a wide range of potential risks is good.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Langdon College is part of the Langdon Foundation, a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. It is a small residential and day college that provides education and support primarily for Jewish learners who have a variety of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including autistic spectrum disorder. The college has two centres. One centre is in Salford, Greater Manchester; this was the original centre. Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have opened a second centre in Edgware, north London. At the time of the inspection, the college had an interim principal and the newly appointed principal (designate) was acting as the head of education in London.
- Learners are recruited nationally from Jewish communities in Manchester, north London, Kensington, Chelsea, and Gateshead. At the time of the inspection, there were 12 learners in the Salford centre and eight in the Edgware centre.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the college by ensuring that:
 - tutors have consistently high expectations of what learners can achieve
 - tutors set targets for learners that are individualised and sufficiently challenging to enable them to achieve their full potential
 - learning activities are appropriate for learners' needs, ages and abilities, and link explicitly to their individual learning plans, which are based on their education, health and care (EHC) plans
 - tutors deploy learning support assistants effectively so that learners are supported appropriately to achieve their full potential
 - oral and written feedback to learners helps them to improve their work and reach the highest possible standards.
- Simplify the arrangements for monitoring, reviewing and recording learners' overall progress that they make from their starting points.
- Ensure that leaders, managers and governors apply rigorously and consistently their recent actions to eliminate all areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Develop the curriculum offer to give learners access to a wider range of practical subjects to develop their independence and work-related skills to enable them to have greater opportunities when they leave the college.
- Ensure that new appointments are made to the governing body so that governors have the appropriate skills to provide rigorous challenge and support to leaders and managers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Governors and former leaders have been too slow to rectify the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The college has experienced a period of instability in its senior management team since the previous inspection in 2016. Staff restructuring in the summer of 2017 resulted in the departure of two senior managers and many teaching and support staff. For example, almost all staff in the London centre are newly appointed. As a result, it has taken too long to implement actions to address areas for improvement. New leaders recognise the need to operate the two sites as one college with the same practices and expectations. They have very recently started to implement actions to achieve this goal.
- Leaders and managers are not sufficiently ambitious for all learners. Learners' educational and training targets are not challenging enough to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress requires further improvement. Systems are still too complex. They do not provide a sufficiently coherent overview so that managers and tutors can see clearly learners' progress compared to their long-, medium- and short-term goals. As a result, managers and tutors do not have a clear understanding of how learners are progressing across all areas of their programmes of study from their individual starting points.
- Quality improvement arrangements require further development. Managers have not yet focused on measuring the impact that their actions are having on improving the quality of the provision. They record whether a process has been implemented rather than whether their actions have led to improvements in the quality of learners' experiences and achievements. As a result, they have not identified weaknesses accurately or taken appropriate action to eliminate them swiftly enough.
- The curriculum offer across the college is too narrow. It does not include a wide enough range of practical subjects to develop learners' independence and work-related skills effectively. Work experience is not purposeful for a significant minority of learners and it does not develop their work-related skills appropriately. In Manchester, residential learners learn routinely how to live more independently, for example how to clean and iron. Learners go shopping regularly in the community but there is limited evidence that day learners develop necessary housekeeping skills, such as budgeting and cleaning, to develop their independence further.
- New leaders and managers have the skills and enthusiasm to drive forward further improvements successfully. Despite the short amount of time in which new leaders have been in post, they are able to articulate how their recent actions have started to lead to improvements in the quality of learners' experiences. Leaders and governors recognise there is much more to do. The full impact of their new initiatives to bring about rapid improvements are not yet evident.
- Leaders and managers in the London centre are using recently introduced processes effectively to quality-assure teaching, learning and assessment. Action plans resulting from observations are detailed and actions are time-bound. As a result, tutors know what they need to do to improve their practices. A useful post-observation self-evaluation helps tutors to reflect on their performance and identify ways to improve their teaching.

However, this has not yet ensured that teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good.

- Leaders and staff promote an inclusive culture for learners and their parents/carers. The environment is warm and welcoming and provides a safe place for learners. Parents of residential learners report that managers provide detailed and regular information about the development of their young person, including events that parents can attend. Leaders, staff and governors promote a culture of openness and respect for all.
- Performance management, although developing, is now effective across the college. New performance management processes have enabled leaders and managers to set high standards and to support staff to improve their performance. All staff are now accountable for the quality of the provision at the college. Consequently, a large number of staff have chosen to leave the college. Staff and governors speak positively about their working relationships at all levels within the college. Managers have fortnightly one-to-one meetings with teaching staff; these focus on improvements identified from lesson observation activities. Teaching staff are now clear about what they do successfully and which elements of their teaching and assessment techniques they need to improve.
- Staff benefit from a wide range of training and development activities. As a result, all staff, including support staff, are quickly developing the knowledge and skills required to meet the changing needs of their learners. Staff training includes a wide range of courses, including behaviour management, first aid, equality and diversity, food hygiene, health and safety, manual handling, assessing mental capacity, infection control and administering medication. However, leaders have not yet implemented sufficient training to develop teaching practices further.
- Leaders and managers utilise the funding for learners with high needs effectively. Learners benefit from a range of interventions and resources that support their learning and development successfully. These include direct and indirect support from the multidisciplinary team, for example speech and language therapy and physiotherapy, as well as one-to-one support. As a result, learners develop good behaviour and good communication and social skills. Learners are provided with good-quality specialist resources in lessons that support their learning effectively. Learners with more complex needs are provided with appropriate technology to aid their learning and understanding, for example, mobile and augmentative technology that supports successfully the development of their communication skills.

The governance of the provider

- The governing body recognises that it needs to improve its own performance rapidly. However, it has improved since the previous inspection with the help and support of new leaders. Governors are working collaboratively and closely with leaders to develop the future strategy and ambitions of the college, and to rectify areas for improvement. Governors now receive appropriate information to help them identify the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and to support and challenge all leaders effectively.
- Governors recognise that there are skills gaps in the governing body. They have taken effective action to recruit new governors, with educational backgrounds, to the board, both in Manchester and in London, but at the time of the inspection these appointments were not yet fully confirmed.

- Governors are passionate about the college and its learners. They are supportive of the new senior team and the improvements that they are starting to make. Governors have introduced new committees, for example the business development group, to enhance further the development of the college.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. During the inspection, inspectors raised concerns over the security of the external access to the college's internet and the Disclosure and Barring Service procedures. Leaders took immediate action to rectify the issues successfully before the end of the inspection. Inspectors were assured that learners were not, and had not been, at risk or unsafe at any time.
- Safeguarding referral records are clear and fit for purpose. Staff identify concerns appropriately and refer learners to relevant agencies when necessary. Individual risk assessments are updated regularly in relation to learners' changing needs.
- Staff, learners and governors receive effective training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff discuss the risks of radicalisation and extremism appropriately with learners. Learners' knowledge and understanding of these issues are good. For example, they use the 'Manchester bee', a symbol of the city's hard-working past during the Industrial Revolution, to demonstrate how communities work together and, in this case, look after each other.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require further improvement to ensure consistency across the college. Not all tutors have sufficiently high expectations of what learners can achieve. They do not challenge them effectively enough so that they make at least the progress of which they are capable in all subjects.
- Tutors do not take sufficient account of the individual needs of learners to plan their lessons. Activities and learning materials displayed on classroom walls are often not age-appropriate or relevant to learners. Inspectors observed learners completing activities that were significantly below their prior achievements and levels of ability, for example attaching stickers to pre-made cards without understanding the purpose of what they were doing. Where tutors plan their lessons more effectively, learners make good progress. In a few lessons, learners made good contributions because their tutor targeted individual learners to answer questions and to check their progress and achievements.
- Staff, including the multidisciplinary team, undertake detailed assessments of learners' starting points to identify their long-, medium- and short-term goals. However, tutors do not consistently use the results of these assessments appropriately to set relevant, individual and personalised targets for learners that will help them to achieve their ambitions, including the development of independence and work-related skills.
- Learners' targets in lessons do not link directly to their individual needs and abilities. In Manchester, targets in English and mathematics are too broad and are directed at all learners in the group. They are not broken down into small steps of learning to help learners achieve at a pace appropriate to their needs. Where mathematics lessons have clear links to learners' needs and abilities, learners benefit from taking part in effective

activities that help them to practise and consolidate their skills, and develop skills they will require for employment. For example, the teaching of measurements of capacity were linked to learners' career aspirations of working in the hospitality industry. Learners were able to practise successfully making a non-alcoholic cocktail using the measurements covered in the theory part of the lesson.

- Tutors do not deploy learning support assistants effectively or consistently in the college. In the majority of lessons, learning support assistants do not make sufficient contribution to learning activities. As a result, learners do not make enough progress to achieve their long-, medium- and short-term goals.
- Tutors' feedback to learners requires improvement, as learners do not always understand what they have achieved or what they need to do to improve. Inspectors observed good practice in life and living skills lessons. In these lessons, learners made good progress as they had a clear understanding of what to do next. Where tutors use questioning techniques in lessons, they do not use them effectively enough to check learners' understanding and to ensure that all make valued contributions to lessons. As a result, the more confident learners dominate the lesson.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of personal support and therapies that develop their communication and social skills. Therapists work effectively with tutors to ensure that learners' speech and language, occupational and physical therapy needs are linked directly to their education, health and care (EHC) plans. As a result, learners make good progress in developing their communication and social skills. In London, learners make good progress in developing their independent living skills.
- Learners develop a good understanding of diversity and respect for others. They learn how to take turns, listen to each other and value the contributions of others. For example, learners demonstrated high levels of confidence in giving a digital presentation to their peers. Other learners listened carefully and gave feedback on the strengths of the presentation using sticky notes and telling their colleagues what they had done well and why. Learners engaged productively in a well-managed discussion about different religious holidays and customs. Learners were able to acknowledge and discuss their own biases relating to their understanding of different faiths and customs.
- Tutors and learning support assistants manage the behaviour of learners effectively. As a result, the vast majority of learners are able to remain in lessons and participate in a meaningful way. Where learners need to take time out, they are supported appropriately by trained staff without causing disruption to others.
- Tutors have developed innovative activities to help learners develop their English skills. For example, learners make good use of their vocabulary books as prompts when answering questions. Tutors have recently been trained to link questions to four levels of language development of naming, describing, re-telling and justifying to help to develop learners' oral skills. Tutors mark learners' work carefully to identify spelling and sentence-construction errors. They support learners successfully to develop their creative and descriptive writing skills. For example, pre-entry learners were able to sound out the letters needed to spell the names of fruits and repeat the correct spellings accurately.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The speech and language therapist works effectively with managers and tutors to develop clear behaviour support plans for learners. These make a significant difference in enabling staff to use a variety of successful strategies to support and improve learners' behaviour. Learners demonstrate good behaviour and are ready to learn. Attendance and punctuality in lessons are good.
- Learners take pride in their work. Their work is displayed regularly around the college. In Manchester, learners attach quick response (QR) codes effectively to photographs of what they do in lessons. These are displayed throughout the college and provide video footage of how learners complete their activities successfully over time. Consequently, learners have constant and effective reminders about the work they have completed, which helps to maintain their knowledge, skills and understanding for future reference.
- Learners value the good support they receive from their tutors. They enjoy lunchtimes at the college when all learners and staff eat together. These activities contribute to learners' development of good social interaction skills.
- Learners have a good understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles. In Manchester, learners benefit from regular sports sessions, including trampolining and rock climbing, that develop their fitness levels effectively. In London, learners are actively involved in preparing lunch with learning support staff and the college's cook. They develop the skills needed to prepare food safely. As a result, learners are aware of the value of healthy foods. They demonstrate successfully their understanding of how to provide nourishment for themselves and for others.
- Learners benefit from independent and impartial information, advice and guidance prior to starting their studies. Staff manage the transition of learners into the college effectively. Transition plans contain a range of useful information, including from schools, parents and external agencies. However, transition planning for progression out of the college requires further development so that learners are better prepared for their next steps. Planning is insufficiently linked to learners' long-term goals set at the start of their studies. Leaders and managers do not ensure that learners have a sufficient choice of what they would like and are able to do. For example, the majority of learners progress to supported living within the Langdon Foundation without other suitable alternatives being considered routinely.
- Learners report feeling safe in college and at their work placements. They know there are potential dangers online and they can articulate where they would go to for help if they have concerns. Learners have produced helpful prompts and pictorial clues on how to keep safe online and these are displayed in the classroom. Learners sign in and out of the college efficiently with the help of pictorial prompts. They can recognise their own name on lanyards. As a result, learners develop a good understanding of why and how they need to take personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others.
- Learners in London develop work-related skills successfully through well-planned work-experience placements. The development of work-related skills has a high priority in London, with a range of highly appropriate work placements, including those sought outside the Jewish community. Staff in London have a clear understanding of learners' work aspirations and they link these effectively to learners' preferences and abilities.

Learners who have limited or no speech rely on cartoon-type pictures of job roles to make work-placement choices. Consequently, these are confusing and do not reflect real people in real jobs. Work-experience placements in Manchester do not match routinely learners' future aspirations and ambitions. Work-related skills are not reinforced consistently through classroom-based activities.

- Leaders and managers prepare learners well for independent and supported travel. Managers in London have developed very good links with Transport for London to aid travel training for learners. Learners across the college are able to use public transport to travel independently or semi-independently, and with confidence.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Learners' targets are not sufficiently challenging. They do not build on learners' prior achievements and help them to make the progress of which they are capable. The most able learners develop their own knowledge. Tutors do not carry forward consistently targets that learners do not achieve. As a result, these milestones in their learning are lost.
- Achievement of accredited courses was incorrectly recorded for 2015/16. While anomalies between external achievement rates and the college's data have been explained fully, the irregularities were due to previous leaders claiming achievements before awarding organisations had confirmed that learners had passed their qualifications. Current leaders are putting in place safeguards to ensure that learners' work is moderated appropriately before submission to awarding organisations and to ensure that official confirmation is received before achievement rates are recorded.
- Achievement rates on accredited courses have improved significantly over the past two years. According to college data, the majority of learners on accredited courses achieve their qualification or appropriate units successfully.
- Learners make good progress in developing their communication and social skills. This helps them to interact effectively in college and, for residential learners, in their home settings. As a result of improved communication skills, learners' confidence improves and the majority of learners are able to interact successfully and confidently with people they have not met before.
- Learners' progression to positive destinations is good. Of the four leavers in 2016/17, one progressed to paid employment and three progressed to voluntary work. Three learners moved successfully to supported living arrangements. The destination data for the two current learners in their final year indicates that they are developing the skills they need to progress to positive destinations.
- Managers analyse the performance of different groups of learners effectively. They take swift action when they identify underperformance. As a result, there are no significant gaps in attainment between different groups of learners.

Provider details

Unique reference number	131910
Type of provider	Independent specialist college
Age range of learners	16–25
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	24
Principal/CEO	Helen Bramley (interim)
Telephone number	0161 740 5900
Website	http://langdonuk.org/education

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	8	12	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	20							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of education in Manchester, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the college.

Inspection team

Suzanne Wainwright, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Gay	Ofsted Inspector
Rosy Belton	Ofsted Inspector

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