

Inspection of Lambeth College (trading as South Bank College)

Inspection dates: 1 to 4 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Lambeth College (trading as South Bank College) is a general further education college situated in the borough of Lambeth in south London. It is part of London South Bank University (LSBU), following a merger in February 2019. The college has campuses in Clapham and Brixton.

The college offers a broad curriculum to full- and part-time learners, as well as to apprentices and learners with high needs. A significant proportion of the provision for adults and education programmes for young people is English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). At the time of the inspection, the college taught 5893 learners, of whom 4576 were adults. Of the remaining 1317 learners, 987 were on education programmes for young people, 215 were learners with high needs, and 115 were apprentices.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners describe the college as a family, of which they are privileged to be a part. The college is a calm and respectful place, and all learners are welcome to join their community.

Leaders have high expectations of their learners. Learners are well behaved and in the main they are ambitious to achieve well in their studies. As a result, learners in a very diverse area of London are respectful of the views of their peers and they work well together in lessons. For example, in GCSE English, learners from different racial and religious backgrounds discussed sensitively animal welfare issues across the world, with consideration of how views may change in light of cultural and religious influences.

Learners benefit from being taught by teachers who know their subjects well. In vocational subjects, teachers use their practical experience of working in their sector to bring lessons to life. Apprentices benefit from learning from teachers and workplace mentors who are highly knowledgeable. Apprentices trust their professional judgement and contact them if they need any advice while at work. Apprentices develop the skills they need to work successfully alongside their more-experienced colleagues.

Leaders have established a college-wide work experience programme which enables a large proportion of learners on study programmes to learn about the world of work. Learners with high needs benefit from effective internship opportunities in vocational settings such as a hospital and a café, which help to improve their independence, confidence, and employability skills.

All learners at the college have the opportunity to attend individual appointments with a qualified careers adviser to learn about their possible next steps in education and employment. Teachers also provide learners with subject specific advice and learners benefit from access to a range of careers development events.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have selected a curriculum which meets well the needs of the community that they serve. They have a strong focus on providing an education which will enable learners to gain employment. Leaders work with a carefully selected group of subcontractors, whose curriculum broadens the range of subjects on offer. For example, they work closely with The Skills Centre to provide access to construction courses which meet the needs of local employers.

Leaders have a good understanding of the needs of their learners and plan courses accordingly. For instance, they incorporate valuable digital and employability teaching into their ESOL programmes, which learners can use both when applying for work and in their daily lives.

Curriculum leaders plan their courses well. They teach knowledge in a logical order and ensure that plenty of time is given to revise key topics throughout the course. For example, teachers of GCSE maths take the time to revisit their teaching of fractions before they teach young people about probability. This helps learners to remember what they have been taught, and to use what they remember to learn new knowledge more easily.

Teachers check what learners know and can do at the start of their programmes and use this information to plan their curriculum. For example, teachers of dental technician programmes conduct a thorough assessment of learners' knowledge and dexterity skills as well as asking learners about their personal ambitions before planning their course.

Most teachers make skilful use of a range of strategies to teach learners new knowledge and to help them remember what they have been taught. For example, teachers in health and social care show learners how to use tools such as diagrams and mind maps as well as effective note taking. As a result, learners can remember and apply what they have been taught, and the vast majority achieve their qualifications.

Most teachers make effective use of assessments in lessons to find out what learners know and can do. However, the quality of feedback on learners' written work varies too much. In specific programmes for learners with high needs and in apprenticeships in particular, teachers do not provide learners with helpful enough feedback. As a result, too many of these learners do not know how to improve their work.

Most teachers plan opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge of English through their curriculum. For example, teachers of counselling dedicate time to teaching learners subject specific vocabulary so that they are well prepared to use appropriate professional language at work. Teachers also carefully plan opportunities for learners to develop their confidence in lessons. In level 2 beauty lessons, for example, teachers first explain and demonstrate new beauty techniques before learners have repeated opportunities to practise these skills in the supportive environment of their in-house salon.

Leaders have provided opportunities for learners to develop their wider skills and talents while at college. A high proportion of learners on study programmes engage in activities such as sports, attend sessions on topics such as anti-bullying and sexual violence awareness, and join programmes with organisations such as the Girls' Network and The Jack Petchey Foundation. However, most adult learners do not engage with the college's broader offer, and leaders recognise that they can do more to offer a range of enrichment activities to learners who do not wish to engage with sports.

Leaders have put in place an appropriate range of courses that meet the needs of learners with high needs. The curriculum for learners with high needs is well planned and well taught. As a result, most learners with high needs complete their

programmes, and a very high proportion achieve their qualifications. However, leaders do not track learners' progress carefully enough. As a result, they do not consistently provide learners with the most appropriate advice and guidance to make plans to progress to their next stage of education or employment.

Leaders recognise that while they have made improvements to learners' attendance since their previous inspection, attendance remains variable and in some subjects is too low. Leaders have in place appropriate systems for addressing poor attendance. However, learners' attendance to lessons in English and mathematics remains too low.

Staff promote fundamental British values throughout the college and teach learners about these at the start of their course and during tutorial sessions. However, too few learners, especially those on ESOL courses, have a clear understanding of what they were taught or how these values relate to themselves and society.

Leaders have put in place a range of appropriate opportunities for teachers to develop their skills. Teachers of learners with high needs praised the training they have received in autism awareness, which better equipped them to meet the needs of their learners. Leaders have demonstrated their commitment to developing leadership among their staff body. In particular, leaders have demonstrated their commitment to developing a leadership team which reflects the diversity of their student body through the creation of a specific training programme to nurture the talents of black future leaders. Staff feel valued and are positive about their future at the college.

Leaders take appropriate steps to evaluate the quality of their provision and take effective actions to make improvements. Leaders recognise the need to improve the physical resources available at the college and are progressing well towards their ambitious plan to open a new college site in Nine Elms and improve the quality of the information technology available at their Clapham campus.

Governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. Governors are well qualified and have a broad range of appropriate experience to ensure that they are well positioned to support and challenge leaders to improve upon any areas for development.

Leaders have guided the college through a period of substantial change over the past few years, a challenge compounded by the impact of COVID-19. However, allowing for these challenges, too many staff find that their workload is too high, too often.

Leaders recognise that recruiting teachers with appropriate knowledge and vocational expertise has been a challenge for their apprenticeship programmes, and that this has hampered apprentices' progress. Leaders have plans to rectify this, in part through their partnership with the London South Bank University.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are committed to safeguarding the welfare and well-being of their learners. Staff responsible for safeguarding are appropriately trained and have a good understanding of their responsibilities. Leaders have invested in appointing learning development coaches to most of their programmes to provide safeguarding support to learners, including offering specialist support for mental health.

Learners feel safe at college and have absolute confidence that, should they face a problem at college or at home, staff would take effective actions to support them. When safeguarding issues do arise, leaders take swift and appropriate action to support learners. Leaders work closely with partner organisations to put in place measures that keep learners safe from local issues such as youth violence, gangs and exploitation.

Leaders have a good understanding of how to safeguard learners from the risks of sexual harassment or abuse. They have taken sensible steps including teaching learners about these topics in tutorial sessions which include the importance of consent and teaching learners where they can find additional support should they need it.

Leaders work closely with partner organisations to gain a good understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism that their learners may face in their local area. Staff do teach learners about these risks and how to keep themselves safe, however some learners struggle to recall what they have been taught.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders need to appoint expert staff to teach apprentices to ensure that they can make progress and achieve their qualifications in a timely manner.
- Leaders need to improve the quality of feedback teachers provide to learners, to ensure that all learners, including apprentices and learners with high needs know how to improve their work.
- Leaders need to ensure that staff accurately track the progress that all learners with high needs make on specialist programmes. They need to provide these learners with the advice and guidance they need to plan their next steps in education and work.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130413
Address	45, Clapham Common Southside Clapham Common London SW4 9BL
Contact number	02075015010
Website	https://www.southbankcolleges.ac.uk/
Principal/CEO	Fiona Morey
Provider type	General College of Further Education
Date of previous inspection	14 to 17 May 2019
Main subcontractors	Astro Martin Ltd Croydon School of Accountancy and Management Tendean Ltd The Skills Network Green Man Skills Zone The Skills Centre Mindful Education

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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