

Inspection of Bradford College

Inspection dates: 1 to 4 October 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Information about this provider

Bradford College is a large general further education college in West Yorkshire. It has seven sites across the city of Bradford, including specialist facilities for advanced technology, sport and the arts. The college provides a range of learning programmes for adults in community venues across Bradford. At the time of inspection, there were 4,462 learners on education programmes for young people, including T-level courses in childcare and construction, 2,653 adult learners and 1,260 apprentices. There were 322 learners with high needs, with around a quarter taught in specialist provision.

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

Learners and apprentices demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their studies. They conduct themselves professionally and are proud of where they study. Apprentices, who are highly motivated, understand what is required of them for their next steps and swiftly acquire the behaviours required by their employers. Adults engage fully in classroom debate, offering perspectives from lived experiences to enrich discussion on topics such as genetic diseases. As a result, learners and apprentices quickly develop the behaviours and attributes that they need for learning and work.

Staff set very high expectations for learners' and apprentices' behaviour. Learners and apprentices demonstrate very high standards of conduct and work collaboratively with their peers. For example, in level 3 applied science, learners work in small groups, with each taking on different roles to complete experiments successfully, and lead professional discussions to evaluate their findings.

Staff, learners and apprentices are highly respectful to each other. They successfully embody the college ethos by demonstrating inclusive attitudes through a thorough understanding of equality and diversity. Learners understand topics such as knife and gang crime and they know what constitutes sexual harassment, such as upskirting. Learners and apprentices feel safe in and around college and know that bullying and harassment are not tolerated. They know how to protect themselves and others and understand the importance of reporting any concerns.

Teachers plan useful and interesting activities to develop learners' and apprentices' confidence in trying new things and interacting with people they do not know. Learners and apprentices benefit from international trips and can participate in gaming, arts, chess and craft clubs. They can learn new skills, such as in Arabic, calligraphy and crochet. Groups of learners volunteer to support the collection of food for a local food bank and help create winter warmer packs for people in need in Bradford. Learners and apprentices who participate in these activities develop their confidence and independence, and improve their health and well-being. However, despite the range of activities available, many learners and apprentices do not take part in them frequently.

Teachers plan interesting opportunities to improve learners' and apprentices' understanding of their communities and the wider world. Learners and apprentices often debate world issues and draw on topical local news stories through controlled group discussions. Adult learners who are studying English come together with local asylum seekers and refugees to share their love for plant-based food in a local café. Learners and apprentices develop the confidence to express their own opinions, even if they may be different to those of others. They can discuss sensitive topics respectfully and tolerantly. This develops the attitudes that they need to flourish in a diverse society.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

The college contributes substantially to meeting the priorities of the mayoral combined authority and the local skills improvement plan. It provides many courses to address specific skills shortages in the Bradford district, such as providing training in the local community to build the literacy, numeracy and digital skills that adults need to gain and sustain employment. The college also has in place significant provision for learners who speak English as an additional language. Learners on these courses successfully improve their English language skills, which prepares them well to access further training opportunities and gain employment.

Leaders and managers have planned an effective curriculum to address local and regional skills deficits. For example, leaders work with the local hospital so they can fully understand the NHS workforce plan, which outlines the need for nurses, radiographers, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. They liaise effectively with stakeholders, such as employers and the local university, to determine and coordinate the local offer in Bradford. This has resulted in leaders ceasing delivery of a degree apprenticeship in business so they did not duplicate the university's established offer.

Staff across most courses actively involve stakeholders in the design and implementation of the curriculum. Teachers frequently review the dental nurse apprenticeship topics and the priority in which they are delivered with dental surgeries. In adult motor vehicle lessons, employers contribute to the curriculum by teaching staff and learners about technological advances such as adaptive cruise control systems. On carpentry apprenticeships, employers in specialist industries such as glass roofs and cladding systems have visited the college to deliver training to staff. However, in a few subjects, such as entry-level childcare and health and social care on the preparation for learning and work programme, stakeholders have very limited involvement in influencing the curriculum.

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

Leaders have created a truly inclusive culture at the college. They are ambitious for learners and apprentices from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed at the college. Leaders have a good understanding of learners' and apprentices' diverse needs and take effective steps to reduce barriers to learning. They provide high-quality facilities with social and independent learning spaces, including for virtual reality activities and videoconferencing. Leaders also provide free bus passes, breakfasts and learning tools such as backpacks, stationery and academic planners to help learners and apprentices while at college. Learners and apprentices value their education and demonstrate a high level of commitment.

Leaders and managers have developed a broad curriculum with entry points at multiple levels to ensure that prior attainment presents no barrier to future learning.

They have increased the entry-level and level 1 offer to provide young people with few or no prior qualifications with a varied and rich curriculum that develops their interests in subjects such as public service, sport, childcare and health and social care. Leaders have developed an effective curriculum for learners with high needs that enables these learners to gain key knowledge, skills and behaviours for independence and adulthood. This ensures that learners are well prepared for transition to further learning or work.

Most teachers make good use of information about learners' and apprentices' starting points and the results of initial assessment to set ambitious learning goals. GCSE English teachers assess learners' writing alongside previous grades to set teaching groups and identify achievable targets. Teachers of courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) group learners based on the specific skills that they need to acquire to ensure that the right level of support is provided. Teachers identify accurate starting points for learners with high needs and set helpful targets that are frequently reviewed. However, in a few instances on the progression to learning and work programme, teachers do not consider academic starting points well enough when learners are recruited. Learners sometimes follow course content they have already learned successfully at school, which slows their progress in developing new vocational knowledge and skills.

Teachers sequence learning well and use effective teaching strategies to consolidate learners' knowledge before moving on to new concepts. For example, teachers on nursing and midwifery courses rephrase and adapt their explanations to ensure that they are clear. Learners on these courses then take part in rich group discussion and peer learning to enable them to understand underpinning medical theories fully before applying them to workplace scenarios.

Most teachers use effective teaching strategies to develop apprentices' vocational knowledge. They work closely with workplace mentors to ensure that apprentices get the right support to improve their skills and develop professional behaviours. For example, on the level 3 pharmacy technician apprenticeship, teachers develop apprentices' knowledge about the anatomy of the brain to help them understand more about patients suffering from Parkinson's disease. Apprentices know how to use the knowledge that they acquire at college to support their patients at work. Apprentices on dental nurse and pharmacy technician standards make very good progress in applying knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace. A high proportion of these apprentices remain on the course and achieve their apprenticeship. However, too many apprentices in construction and engineering do not complete their apprenticeship.

Teachers use their extensive qualifications and sector expertise to support adult learners to develop their vocational knowledge. Teachers on community interpreting courses ensure that learners are clear about the role of an interpreter so that they do not influence the decision-making of their clients. Learners in motor vehicle engineering benefit from masterclasses planned with employers to develop their technical understanding of concepts such as hybrid engine isolation. As a result,

adult learners gain a greater understanding of their roles or future careers and are well prepared for their chosen next steps.

Teachers make good use of questioning, quizzes and online tools to check understanding and assess learners' and apprentices' knowledge. For example, level 2 electrical installation teachers check that learners fully understand the importance of producing accurate electrical wiring to keep themselves, colleagues and customers safe. Carpentry and joinery teachers assess apprentices' practical work frequently against commercial standards and identify accurately what apprentices need to do to improve their work. Teachers provide clear and informative feedback on marked work, which helps learners and apprentices to improve it to a higher standard. They intervene quickly if learners and apprentices struggle so that they do not fall behind.

Leaders ensure that most learners on education programmes for young people gain valuable experience of the workplace through interactions with employers and access to sector-based masterclasses through the 'ambition hub' initiative. Teachers on T-level childcare programmes arrange for learners to visit forest schools to address their apprehension of facilitating outdoor play. Learners in level 3 applied science take part in visits to local employers, such as the criminal investigation department of West Yorkshire Police, to look at the role of forensic science in policing. However, too many learners do not benefit from purposeful work placement opportunities, particularly in health, science, information technology, construction and engineering. As a result, they do not gather a broad enough experience of job roles in the sectors in which they may work in the future.

Teachers and specialist careers advisers provide very helpful careers information, advice and guidance. They successfully develop learners' confidence by embedding the development of academic study skills and employability skills through the curriculum. Teachers have meaningful discussions with apprentices about their career development, both in their current role and the sector in which they work. Learners with high needs who aim to progress to higher education receive effective support with their university applications. Teachers prepare young people well for the rigours of higher-level study. As a result, most young people who apply to university progress to positive destinations, including prestigious universities.

Leaders and managers place a strong focus on the development of English and mathematical skills. They support teachers with helpful training that develops their English and mathematical knowledge so that they can support learners effectively to develop and practise their skills in lessons. Apprenticeship staff prioritise the delivery of functional skills so that apprentices who need to gain qualifications in functional skills do so early in their programme. Apprentices receive good support to apply mathematical skills in the practical context of their trade. For example, carpentry and joinery apprentices are taught to set out and measure accurately to enable them to order the correct amount of material.

Teachers and support staff of learners with high needs are well qualified. They hold specialist qualifications, such as trauma-informed practice and Makaton. They use

their expertise well to ensure that learners with high needs make good progress and support most learners to achieve their qualifications or learning goals. Teachers prepare learners well for their next steps to greater independence, higher education, further learning or employment. Learners who choose to stay at college progress to higher-level study, and many who leave the college do so with positive destinations planned.

Teachers provide effective support for learners and apprentices with additional learning needs. Learners with dyslexia use coloured overlays and have resources printed on coloured paper. They receive appropriate adjustments to help them with assignments and examinations. Apprentices with additional learning needs receive extra time and support to enable them to process their learning fully.

Managers and teaching staff work closely with stakeholders in the community, such as local primary schools, to identify adults who would benefit from learning English. The significant number of adult learners on ESOL courses benefit from effective teaching that helps them to remember fundamental language techniques. Teachers repeat exercises throughout lessons to enable learners to practise their skills and recall correct English grammar. As a result, learners on ESOL courses improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, and most achieve their qualifications.

Leaders have an effective approach to staff development that staff value highly. Learning and development staff provide helpful training through mentoring and coaching. They provide informative workshops on topics such as digital innovation and assessment for learning that support staff to enhance their practice. Advanced practitioners show staff how to make the best use of technology in sessions and encourage them to take risks in trialling new digital tools.

Leaders and managers have effective arrangements in place to review and improve the quality of their provision. Quality managers conduct frequent curriculum reviews involving lesson visits, learner discussions and an evaluation of teaching resources. They identify programmes that require improvements and have redesigned or introduced new qualifications for programmes that are less effective, such as in computing. However, on a few courses, managers do not have a clear enough oversight of learner destinations on completion of the course to evaluate fully the extent to which their courses meet learner and employer need.

Governors bring a range of appropriate expertise to the corporation. They are specialists in education, finance, engineering and audit and quality improvement. Governors use their knowledge to pose challenging questions to senior leaders to examine their decision-making. They lead on sub-committees linked to their strengths, which adds focused challenge about performance and progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- The provider should ensure that teachers take full account of learners' academic starting points on the progression to learning and work programme so that learners have ambitious learning goals and do not unnecessarily repeat learning.
- The provider should increase the proportion of learners across all education programmes for young people who benefit from purposeful work placement opportunities.
- The provider should continue to increase the proportion of apprentices who complete and achieve their apprenticeships, particularly in construction and engineering.
- The provider should ensure that managers analyse and use information about learners' progression and destinations to measure the impact of the curriculum effectively.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130532
Address	Great Horton Road Bradford BD7 1AY
Contact number	01274 433004
Website	www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Chris Webb
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	9 to 12 November 2021

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal for quality, teaching and learning, 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

Sarah Lonsdale, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Joanne Stork	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Frear	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Dennis	His Majesty's Inspector
Malcolm Fraser	His Majesty's Inspector
Glenise Burrell	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Reynolds-Golding	Ofsted Inspector
Linnia Khemdoudi	Ofsted Inspector
Sambit Sen	Ofsted Inspector
Joanne Keatley	Ofsted Inspector
Shabana Mahmood	Ofsted Inspector
Sonia Stirling	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024