

Inspection of Bradford College

Inspection dates:

9–12 November 2021

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 | Good |
| Provision for learners with high needs | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Information about this provider

Bradford College is a large general further education college that delivers education and training from four main campuses and a variety of community venues across the city of Bradford. Currently, there are 3,524 learners on education programmes for young people. The majority of these learners study at level 1 or level 2, and nearly a quarter study at level 3. There are currently 3,528 adult learners, many of whom are on courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The college provides training to 977 apprentices on behalf of levy and non-levy paying employers, locally, regionally and nationally. There are 220 learners who have high needs. Of these, 145 study discrete programmes. Leaders no longer use subcontractors to teach programmes on their behalf.

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

Leaders and staff create an inclusive environment where learners and apprentices feel welcome. Tutors promote mutual respect and help learners to understand cultural differences. For example, adult learners on ESOL programmes take part in food-tasting activities that help them to appreciate different traditions and heritage. As a result, learners are tolerant and respectful of each other.

Apprentices enjoy their programme and are well motivated to develop their knowledge and skills further. They like the way in which tutors match theoretical learning to working practices and bring in examples from their own employment. For example, apprentices studying the fire, emergency and security standard carry out costing exercises related to the design of an office block.

Learners, including those with high needs, and apprentices feel safe at college and in the workplace. They know who to contact if they have any concerns about their personal safety. Tutors provide useful guidance on how to fact-check information from websites, what to do about unwanted sexual comments, and how to manage risks in the community that may affect personal safety.

Leaders, managers and tutors work well with local employers to provide good-quality work experience and work-related learning opportunities for learners. They plan the curriculum carefully so that learners build their understanding of current industry practices. For example, learners in hairdressing benefit from shadowing stylists in salons. Learners in performing arts have the opportunity to carry out roles such as being a runner on a film set.

Most learners benefit from a calm and purposeful learning environment. Learners work well together to share their experiences and ideas. For example, learners in applied science support each other to make corrections to their work. However, in a very small minority of classes, low-level disruption and poor punctuality have a negative impact on learners' attention to their work.

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

Leaders and managers work with employers and other local stakeholders to build a clear understanding of local skills needs and how the curriculum needs to adapt to changing requirements. Leaders have created a series of 'technical skills hubs' that include employer representatives and governors who meet to discuss future curriculum requirements. For example, leaders and managers plan to include heat pump technologies in the construction curriculum and

invest in more resources to support learners to develop skills in working on hybrid and electric vehicles.

Leaders have a well-defined purpose for the different elements of their adult learning programmes. They offer a wide range of programmes that meet local skills needs and support adults from disadvantaged backgrounds to access learning that will help them to progress to employment or higher-level study. For example, leaders offer courses in information and communication technology to address digital exclusion, and they have recently introduced a heavy goods vehicle training driver training academy.

Leaders and managers are highly ambitious for learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and high needs, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. They create a significant range of opportunities to help raise learners' aspirations, and to encourage learners to aim to do more than they previously thought they could. For example, leaders and managers provide mentors to young learners who think university is not a suitable progression route for them, and they support learners to take part in skills competitions.

Leaders and managers work well with local employers to deliver a high-quality supported internship programme for learners with high needs. They plan supported internships that are tailored effectively to the needs of individual learners and act swiftly to provide additional support when it is needed. As a result, learners with high needs successfully develop the skills they will need for paid employment in the future. For example, learners on supported internships in a local hospital know how to check food temperatures and navigate busy hospital corridors when delivering food to patients.

Most tutors of learners with high needs use assessment effectively in order to identify what learners know and can do, and to plan their teaching. They use information from assessment activities to better understand the incremental progress learners make. However, a small minority of tutors do not check carefully enough the progress of their learners. Consequently, a small number of learners complete tasks that they already know how to do, and tutors do not challenge them to extend their knowledge and skills further.

Apprenticeship tutors plan and sequence the curriculum effectively so that apprentices quickly develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours that are relevant to the workplace. They structure the teaching so that apprentices have a clear grasp of the basic elements of the job before they move on to more complex topics. For example, carpentry and joinery apprentices master measuring, using a plane and cutting before they progress to site-related joinery work, such as hanging doors and fitting staircases. As a result, the very large majority of employers are satisfied with the training that their apprentices receive and say that apprentices add value to their business.

Tutors plan the curriculum well to include effective recall opportunities to check and reinforce learning. They use mock tests and introduce peer-assessment tasks that help learners and apprentices to consolidate what they have learned and commit knowledge to their long-term memory. For example, learners on the second year of an A-level psychology course are able to confidently explain classical conditioning and the work of Pavlov that they were taught about in year one of their programme.

Most tutors support learners and apprentices effectively in order to develop their English and mathematics skills. They integrate well the development of knowledge and skills in English and mathematics into subject-specific activities. Learners on hairdressing courses accurately apply volumes and percentages when they mix hair colours. Where appropriate, tutors also provide helpful guidance to overcome language barriers that might prevent learners from understanding mathematical concepts.

Leaders create a wide range of opportunities for learners to broaden their experiences and develop their character, resilience and confidence. For example, ESOL learners took part in a 'life through the lens' project during the pandemic. This provided a way in which isolated learners could share their experiences. Managers work well with learners to identify issues that matter to them and create opportunities to raise awareness. For example, there are current displays on Islamophobia in the college reception area, and there have recently been activities in college to raise awareness of hate crime. However, apprentices do not benefit from such a comprehensive approach to the planning of their curriculum.

Learners and apprentices benefit from effective careers information, advice and guidance. Tutors support learners and apprentices well to set and develop targets linked to their future career aims. As a result, learners and apprentices know what options are available to them after their programme and what they need to do to achieve their career aims.

Leaders and managers have a clear commitment to staff development. They provide staff with a wide range of relevant continuing professional development activities to support them to improve their teaching skills and subject knowledge. Leaders and managers engage well with external organisations and government funded programmes to enable staff to share good practice with colleagues from outside the college. For example, tutors in hairdressing benefit from training from industry experts.

Governors have the knowledge, skills and experience to carry out their roles effectively. They hold leaders to account constructively in order to ensure that they take action to improve the quality of education that learners and apprentices receive. Governors ask relevant questions about the impact of curriculum changes, and they check that the curriculum will provide learners and apprentices with the skills that they need in the workplace.

Staff have a relentless approach to improving learners' attendance. Managers and tutors reinforce with learners the importance of high attendance in the workplace. Tutors monitor attendance carefully and, in most cases, take prompt action where needed. As a result, attendance has improved significantly in many areas of the college. However, attendance is still too low on some programmes, particularly entry level ESOL classes for adults and English and mathematics classes for young people.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff, including the designated safeguarding leader, have received appropriate training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders and managers make effective use of local network groups to keep themselves up to date with the risks learners and apprentices might face in Bradford.

Leaders implement suitable procedures to recruit staff who are fit to work with children and vulnerable adults. They make sure that a wide range of checks are completed and signed off before new staff can take up their role. For example, leaders will not employ new staff who do not receive two satisfactory references from their most recent employers.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Provide targeted support to improve attendance in areas where absence rates are still too high.
- Ensure that all tutors of learners with high needs use assessment well to identify what learners know and can do so that they plan activities that challenge learners to extend their knowledge and skills.
- Ensure that apprentices benefit from a broad range of personal development opportunities that are built into the curriculum.

Provider details

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| Unique reference number | 130532 |
| Address | Great Horton Road Bradford BD7 1AY |
| Contact number | 01274 088088 |
| Website | www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk |
| Principal/CEO | Chris Webb |
| Provider type | General further education college |
| Date of previous inspection | 10–13 October 2017 |
| Main subcontractors | None |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal (quality and student experience), 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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