

# Bishop Auckland College

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 130657

**Name of lead inspector:** Josephine Nowacki HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 25 November 2011

**Type of provider:** General Further Education College

**Address:** Woodhouse Lane  
Bishop Auckland  
County Durham  
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## Information about the provider

1. Bishop Auckland College is a medium-sized general further education college serving the local urban, semi-rural and rural areas of south-west Durham; an area stretching approximately 300 square miles. The population of south-west Durham is around 180,000 and is spread across the three former districts of Weardale, Teesdale and Sedgefield. The levels of worklessness in the area are high and the number of incapacity benefit claimants within the Wear Valley and Sedgefield areas is also high. Levels of literacy and numeracy among the adult population are low.
2. The college has its main site at Woodhouse Lane in Bishop Auckland, a centre specialising in apprenticeships and construction at Spennymoor, and three key community-learning centres at Crook, Newton Aycliffe and in Teesdale. The college makes provision in 11 out of the 15 areas of learning. The area the college serves includes nine 11 to 16 and five 11 to 18 schools; three of the schools have academy status and another three are pending. A further three schools deliver provision for children with special educational needs.
3. The majority of full-time students are aged 16 to 18. Just over three quarters of all students are enrolled onto foundation or intermediate level courses. Approximately 3% of college-based students are from minority ethnic groups, a higher proportion than that found locally. The percentage of Year 11 pupils in the region achieving five GCSE grades at A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is improving but remains below regional and national averages. Just over 51% of the college's students are from disadvantaged areas. An increasing number of 14 to 16 year old pupils attend the college on a part-time basis.
4. A new principal was appointed in April 2010. Since then, partly in response to changes in government funding priorities, but also to the changes needed to tackle some of the issues in the college identified by the new principal, a remodelling and reduction of staffing has taken place. In the last 18 months around 90 staff have left the college. The number of staff with management roles have reduced, as has the senior management team.
5. The college provides training programmes for unemployed people on behalf of the following organisations:
  - New College, Durham
  - Working Links
  - Groundwork

6. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
- Durham Football Association (football coaching)
  - Food and Drink Training Solutions (food manufacturing)
  - GAP Training (road passenger transport)
  - J & K Training (Skills for Life)
  - New Generation Training Consultancy (spectator safety)
  - Profound Services Ltd (road passenger transport)
  - SW Durham Training Ltd (engineering)
  - SWP Training Ltd (motor vehicle repair)
  - Training Assessment and Consultancy Services Ltd (water utilities)
  - Universal Learning Streams (play work)

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled students in 2010/11</b>
<p><b>Provision for young students:</b> 14 to 16</p> <p>Further education (16 to 18)</p> <p>Foundation learning</p>	<p>181 part-time students</p> <p>1,016 full-time students and 751 part-time students</p> <p>434 full-time students and 12 part-time students</p>
<p><b>Provision for adult students:</b> Further education (19+)</p>	<p>675 full-time students and 4,157 part-time students</p>
<p><b>Employer provision:</b> Train to Gain Apprenticeships</p>	<p>1,174 students 367 apprentices</p>
<p><b>Informal adult learning</b></p>	<p>413 students</p>

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for students	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

<b>Subject Areas</b>	
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Hospitality and catering	2
Leisure, travel and tourism	3
Visual and performing arts	3

## Overall effectiveness

7. During a period of significant change, the college has improved much of its provision and it is now good. The Principal has successfully raised the aspirations and expectations of staff and students. Success rates have risen since the previous inspection and most are at or above the national average for 2009/10. Pass rates are high or very high in the majority of subject areas and the proportion of students who drop out of their courses early is decreasing. Rates of improvement are variable between subject areas, but the college has plans to remedy this. Students develop good social and personal skills. Good provision in literacy and numeracy is increasing students' employability skills. Punctuality is good. Attendance, though improved, is satisfactory.
8. The college has focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching and learning and has established a rigorous system of lesson observation, introduced advanced practitioners and invested considerably in staff development. Much teaching is now good or better and this is impacting positively on student outcomes. Learners enjoy college and the majority make

good progress, especially given their very low starting points. The range of provision, much of it delivered flexibly, adequately meets the needs of students.

9. Care, guidance and support are good and effective in helping students overcome barriers to learning so they can succeed. High priority is given to safeguarding students and to the promotion of equality and diversity. In the demanding contexts in which the college works, students get on well together and a culture of respect and tolerance permeates the college.

## Main findings

- Outcomes are good and improving quickly for the majority of students. The overall success rate is high and the rate of improvement is faster than the national average. Success rates on long courses have improved consistently and are now slightly above the national average. On foundation and intermediate courses, success rates are high or very high for substantial numbers of students. In a few subjects, the rate of improvement has not been as rapid as that seen elsewhere in the college.
- Outcomes for learners on employer-based courses have improved for apprentices to a satisfactory level. Success rates for students on Train to Gain courses are excellent. The college makes a significant contribution to improving the literacy and numeracy skills of adults from the communities it serves.
- Pass rates across all provision are high, and in many areas are very high. Retention is improving but remains slightly below average. Analysis of the performance of different groups of students shows no significant trend of underperformance.
- The standard of students' work is good. From very low starting points the majority of students make good progress, especially in improving their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. Attendance has improved to a satisfactory level but students' attendance in a few areas, especially where programmes are delivered flexibly, remains low and this inhibits the progress made by a significant minority of students.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The majority of lessons are thoroughly planned to include motivating and stimulating activities that are vocationally relevant and prepare students well for employment. Teachers monitor students' progress carefully. In the less effective lessons, teachers dominate, there are too few checks on learning through effective questioning and the level of stretch and challenge is insufficient.
- The range of the provision is satisfactory. The college offers flexible access to courses at the main college site. Extensive provision in community venues meets the needs of adult students in rural and isolated communities very successfully. Curriculum planning is responsive to local priorities and students' needs. Progression opportunities between levels of courses are satisfactory. Curriculum enrichment activities enhance learning well and contribute to good efforts to promote community cohesion.

- Partnerships and collaborative working are good and extend opportunities for the communities the college serves. College staff work closely with local schools to plan the curriculum for school pupils aged 14 to 16. Links with employers are generally good. However, many students do not have access to appropriate work experience opportunities to help develop their employability skills.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Individual student needs are supported very effectively. Recent changes to the delivery of initial guidance have been very effective in increasing the number of students who stay on their courses and succeed. Systems for identifying students who need additional help and support are effective. The group tutorial programme is effective in providing a wide range of helpful and relevant topics but the quality of tutorial delivery is variable. Students value highly their individual tutorials.
- The Principal provides strong and energetic leadership and, together with senior managers and governors, has created a culture that is raising expectations among staff and students. A clear vision and strategic direction is clearly communicated and understood by all staff. The curriculum management team, though new, is having a significant and positive impact on achieving college priorities in most areas. Governance is good. Financial management is strong.
- The impact and consistency of quality assurance are good. Accessible and accurate data are used rigorously to evaluate the college's work and to set targets and monitor performance. The system for the observation of teaching and learning is robust and focuses appropriately on learning. The college self-assesses itself accurately. However, in a few curriculum self-assessment reports areas for improvement are insufficiently explicit.
- The college places a high priority on the promotion of equality and diversity. Data are analysed thoroughly to identify differences in achievement between, for example, males and females, socio-economic backgrounds and the small number of minority ethnic students. Staff work hard to eliminate barriers to learning wherever possible. Arrangements to secure the safeguarding of students are thorough.

## **What does Bishop Auckland College need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the rate of improvement, particularly in retention, is accelerated and sustained in all areas of provision, particularly in the areas where improvement has been slower.
- Improve attendance by devising more robust ways of recording and monitoring the attendance of all students but especially those on programmes that are delivered flexibly.
- Ensure that all lessons include activities that stretch and challenge the abilities of all students. Improve questioning techniques that teachers use so that they check fully students' understanding and how well they are learning and making progress.

- Improve links with employers to increase the work-based learning provision and to improve students' opportunities to gain work experience and improve their job prospects.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What students like:**

- the teachers' friendly support and the way they go the extra mile to help them
- being listened to and treated with respect by staff
- being given a second chance to gain qualifications
- the improved tutorials
- the safe and welcoming environment
- the excellent facilities including the nursery and free gym
- the flexible way courses are delivered
- the financial support and free transport to and from college.

#### **What students would like to see improved:**

- the long gaps between lessons
- more things to do during breaks
- opportunities for work experience
- the cramped teaching rooms in a number of areas.

### **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What employers like:**

- the good communication between college staff and employers
- the quick response to any queries
- staff expertise, knowledge and professionalism
- the regular visits to the workplace
- the help and advice provided.

#### **What employers would like to see improved:**

- more information about what is expected when learners begin their apprenticeships and a plan of when assessment and tests will take place.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

10. During a period of turbulence for the college, marked improvements have continued to be made. Through strong leadership, the governors, Principal and senior managers have transformed the college into one where expectations are high. Success rates have improved for nearly all students. Success rates on short courses and on Train to Gain programmes are consistently outstanding. Provision in the community is strong. The proportion of students completing their courses, though still slightly below average, has improved and is high in several subjects. The college is relentless in its pursuit to drive up the quality of teaching and learning and in this it is successful; much teaching and learning is good or better. Data are accurate and used skilfully to set sufficiently challenging improvement targets across all aspects of provision. Most of the annual targets have been met.
11. Robust quality assurance processes have been effective in improving provision in most areas. Focused strategies are in place to address remaining areas of underperformance or where the rate of improvement has been slow. Self-assessment is inclusive, largely accurate and supported by detailed action plans that are monitored closely.

### Outcomes for students

**Grade 2**

12. College data for 2010/11 indicate that success rates at most levels have risen since the previous inspection and many are high. In that period, the rate of improvement has been greater than the national rate. Success rates for the substantial proportion of students aged 16 to 18 at foundation level are consistently high. For adults on intermediate courses, rates were very high in 2010/11. For the smaller proportion of students at advanced level success rates improved but remain just below the previous year's average for similar colleges.
13. Pass rates are high or very high for the majority of students. Success rates for apprentices have improved and are satisfactory. Achievement for students completing within the planned time is satisfactory. Success rates for Train to Gain students are consistently excellent. School pupils aged 14 to 16 achieve well and many progress onto college courses.
14. The college acknowledges that the rapid pace of improvement in success rates has not been seen in all subject areas and that past trends indicate that too many students did not complete their courses. Very focused actions to remedy this, and the small amount of remaining underperformance are in place and are having a positive impact. College data for 2010/11 and current data indicate that many more students are completing their courses and achieving their qualification.

15. Data are used extremely effectively to analyse the achievement of different groups of students. There are no continuing trends of significant underperformance. Students in receipt of additional learning support do as well as their peers, as do the significant number of students who come from areas of severe deprivation.
16. Students enjoy their time at college and speak very positively about the confidence they develop as a result of their studies. Given that a very high proportion of students have very low entry qualifications, it is significant that many of them make good progress in improving their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. Achievement of functional skills is high.
17. Students develop good levels of vocational skills in most subject areas. Progression to higher levels of learning and employment is generally good in many areas of the college. A high proportion of apprentices progress to higher levels of training. Practical skills are well developed. Attendance, although improving, is broadly satisfactory and low in a few areas.
18. Students say that the college provides them with a safe and welcoming learning environment. Staff put much energy into supporting students and helping them to develop the skills of tolerance for one another. The promotion of equality and diversity permeates all aspects of the college's work, including the workplace.
19. Healthy living is promoted extensively through the tutorial programme and the very effective displays around the college. Well-established links with external agencies provide specialist advice, including a weekly sexual health clinic. The college offers a satisfactory range of enrichment activities to promote exercise and healthier lifestyles; participation in these is patchy.
20. Students make a good contribution to the college and wider community through the curriculum enrichment programmes. They value highly the citizenship certificates awarded by the college to recognise volunteers who work on community projects. Increasingly students are asked to play a greater role in the way their college is run, including through the student governor and the many student ambassador roles, and they respond very enthusiastically to this.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

21. A high proportion of teaching is good or better. Features such as effective questioning to extend students' understanding and encourage debate, thoroughly planned interesting activities, lively pace and innovative use of information and learning technology characterised the most successful lessons. In the most effective lessons teachers discuss lesson objectives with students at the beginning of lessons and review them during and at the end of the session through probing questioning. On work-based learning programmes, on- and off-the-job training is thoroughly planned in business administration, motor vehicle and bricklaying programmes.

22. In the less successful sessions planning is poor, teachers speak for too long and do not challenge or motivate students. Questioning to check students' understanding is used infrequently and the pace is slow. Students make slow progress.
23. Behaviour is good in most lessons. In classes where behaviour is more challenging, background music is used effectively to provide a calming atmosphere.
24. Teachers are well qualified and many have extensive vocational experience. Staff in the learning resources centre value the opportunity to take a teaching qualification to help them to support and deliver study skills to students more effectively. Most classrooms provide a comfortable and conducive learning environment with appropriate resources and lively displays to encourage a strong vocational identity. In a few areas, rooms are cramped for the numbers of students in the class.
25. Teachers monitor students' progress carefully. The majority of students benefit from working towards clear individual targets. Assessment is good. Assignment briefs are clear. Most teachers provide students with detailed and useful information on how they can improve their work. However, not all teachers correct students' spelling and grammatical errors. On work-based learning courses, assessment is satisfactory with good practice in business administration and bricklaying. The initial assessment of students' literacy and numeracy levels and further diagnostic assessment lead to timely and effective support.
26. The college has given a very high priority to improving the lesson observation system and it is now rigorous. Outcomes of individual observations are linked closely to performance review and professional development. Individual action plans have precise targets that are monitored regularly. The outcomes of all lesson observations are analysed systematically to identify themes that inform the staff development sessions that are offered frequently throughout the year. Advanced practitioners provide highly effective coaching for those teachers needing extra support.
27. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students is satisfactory on college-based courses. An adequate range of provision, often delivered flexibly, is offered at the main college site on Woodhouse Lane. Provision on work-based programmes meets learners' and employers' needs very well. Extensive provision in outreach centres meets the needs of adults in the surrounding rural and often isolated communities. Strategic curriculum planning takes account of national, regional and local priorities. Courses in many areas are planned thoroughly to support students' progression into further study, employment or higher education. The college recognises that provision in a few curriculum areas, including opportunities for progression, is too narrow and plans are in place to rectify this.
28. Partnerships and community links, including those with schools, are strong. The college plays a leading role in local partnership groups, including the 14 to 19

strategy forum. Well-established links with external agencies focus strongly on supporting social inclusion and employability projects that successfully target those not in education, employment or training. Links with employers are positive; employers speak highly of the good communications with the Principal and other college staff. However, as the college recognises, links with employers in a few curriculum areas are underdeveloped. The college is aware that it needs to extend work placements and work experience opportunities to help more students progress into employment.

29. Care, guidance and support for learners are good. The revised systems for providing initial advice and guidance and the very helpful induction are proving effective in ensuring students are on the most appropriate courses. As a result, retention is improving in most areas. Support staff are highly qualified and many have specialist qualifications in counselling and behaviour management. Systems to identify and monitor students identified as vulnerable and at risk of leaving their courses early are very effective; students speak positively about how the support they receive helps them to stay on track. The tutorial programme has been revised recently to incorporate a good range of topics that many students find helpful. However, the quality of tutorial delivery is inconsistent.
30. Support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well coordinated and effective. Students with behaviour problems welcome the 'chill out' rooms that provide an effective release to enable them to regain composure.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

31. The Principal and governors provide strong leadership and demonstrate high expectations and ambition for staff and students. The Principal's vision and a redefined strategic direction have been communicated clearly to staff. A 'can do' culture pervades the college and a sense of common purpose has been established quickly. The many recent changes and challenges faced by the college have been managed very decisively. Communication has improved significantly and staff value the open and transparent Principal's briefings, staff conferences and workshops. Much has been achieved in a short space of time, including improved success rates at most levels.
32. The recently appointed curriculum leaders are already having a positive impact in their own curriculum areas and are successfully promoting high standards and raising achievement. However, as the college recognises, this team is in the initial stages of its work and more needs to be done to improve performance in a few remaining curriculum areas. A recent restructure in work-based provision has resulted in clearer lines of responsibility and greater accountability, but there is more to do to ensure consistency of practice within curriculum areas.
33. The governing body is highly supportive. Governors have good local knowledge, experience and a strong commitment to support the college's strategic priorities through the setting of ambitious improvement targets. They monitor the

performance of the college closely and fulfil their statutory duties conscientiously. Governors self-assess their performance regularly and use this to inform plans to increase the impact of their work.

34. Governors, managers and staff place a high priority on safeguarding. Detailed policies and procedures for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults are securely in place and reviewed regularly. Staff and students are fully aware of the procedures for reporting any concerns they have. Rigorous procedures to ensure the safe recruitment of staff, including suppliers and subcontractors, are implemented very effectively. Staff, the college's suppliers, including cleaners and bus drivers, governors and the seven designated child-protection officers have received appropriate training. The college has very good links with the local Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults boards and other key external agencies to extend the college services already available to support those at risk. Health and safety are managed well.
35. Equality and diversity are promoted successfully on college sites and in the workplace. Senior and other managers demonstrate strong commitment to ensuring an inclusive environment. Data are analysed and evaluated thoroughly to identify any gaps in achievement and to inform actions for improvement where appropriate. Data are also used very effectively to plan community provision in areas of high deprivation. The college's good provision in literacy and numeracy makes a notable contribution to improving students' life chances. The college works cooperatively with other partners to support those young people who potentially might not engage in education or training. Equality and diversity are an integral part of induction and are embedded within the tutorial system. Teachers and trainers use opportunities in lessons and training to challenge students' views effectively and to encourage debate. Students value the atmosphere of mutual respect.
36. The college uses a wide range of effective strategies to seek and respond to students' views. Students are able to comment on the quality of the curriculum and other aspects of college life and they say that managers are responsive to their suggestions and comments. For example, in response to student feedback, the college has invested heavily in new computers, established a new sixth-form centre and increased the number of student communal areas. Formal arrangements to capture stakeholders' and employers' views have been strengthened through a more proactive approach taken by the principal. Views on the quality of training for work-based learners and employers is collected systematically during reviews and evaluated fully to inform future developments.
37. Quality assurance arrangements are good and have been effective in securing rapid improvements across most areas of the college's work. Arrangements for self-assessment are inclusive and thorough. Judgements, moderated fully by senior managers, governors and external consultants, are broadly accurate. In a few curriculum reports, areas for improvement are insufficiently explicit in the body of the report.

38. Data are used very well to interrogate performance and set realistic and challenging targets. Interventions, such as close monitoring of targets by senior managers and strengthened performance management, are resulting in marked improvements. The arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching, training and learning are both rigorous and supportive.
  
39. Financial management is strong. The college has a well-considered and prudent approach to financial planning that is supported by robust monitoring of budgets. Financial reports to governors and senior managers are accurate, well presented and informative. Learning resources are mostly good. However, catering kitchens and the sports fitness room are cramped for the numbers of students in the classes. Management of the college estate is very good and incorporates well-founded initiatives to support sustainable development.

## Subject areas

### Hairdressing and beauty therapy

### Grade 2

#### Context

40. The subject area offers full- and part-time courses from foundation to advanced level. Courses are provided in hairdressing, beauty therapy, including nail services, and in complementary therapies. Of the 261 students enrolled in the area, 148 are aged 16 to 18 and 113 are adults.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good overall and improving rapidly. Success rates are good at foundation level in hairdressing and beauty therapy, at intermediate- and advanced-level courses in hairdressing, and at advanced level in beauty therapy. At intermediate level, success rates on beauty therapy courses are low because of low retention. Current data indicate that retention strategies are successful and more students are remaining on their courses and achieving.
- Students make good progress. The standard of work is good and student portfolios are comprehensive. Feedback is supportive and constructive although spelling mistakes are not corrected routinely. Progression into employment or higher education is good for many students. Students make a good contribution to the community through a number of events including 'Prom' hair and make-up events at schools, local fairs and pamper sessions for carers.
- Students report that they feel safe around the college and that security is strong. Standards of sterilisation and general health and safety are reinforced satisfactorily. Promotion of health and well-being is good.
- Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons teachers' effective planning and their use of an appropriate range of learning activities maintain students' interest. Electronic resources, such as interactive whiteboards, are used innovatively to enhance learning. Students' understanding is checked frequently throughout the lesson. Where teaching is weaker, students are often insufficiently challenged and this slows their progress.
- The range of provision is satisfactory. Recent revisions to the curriculum have resulted in more students staying to complete their courses and an increase in those progressing to the next level. However, the department recognises the need to broaden the curriculum further and provide more opportunities for progression. For example, plans are in place to introduce apprenticeships in hairdressing in January 2012. Links with local schools are good.
- Opportunities for enrichment and work experience are extensive and planned well. Students' participation in competitions is strongly encouraged and this successfully raises their aspirations. For example, one hairdressing student recently achieved the National Tallow Chandlers Prize and received a 'highly commended' certificate from City and Guilds Medals for Excellence. The area

promotes a strong identity through, for example, notice boards displaying photographs celebrating students' successes. Students maintain high standards of professionalism and take pride in wearing their uniforms.

- Care, guidance and support are good. Changes to the delivery of initial advice and guidance have impacted positively on retention. Students speak highly of the support they receive from their tutors and value their individual meetings to monitor their progress and discuss their work.
- Channels of communication are good and teamwork is strong. Arrangements for quality assurance are effective in raising standards rapidly. Realistic but challenging targets are set for retention and achievement and are monitored closely through the curriculum audits. Teachers and managers use data routinely to evaluate performance and plan for future provision.
- Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Salons are generally fit for purpose. However, a few salons are cluttered; large metal stationery cupboards and metal filing cabinets detract from a realistic salon environment. Display material is plentiful, but sometimes cluttered.
- Opportunities for students to express their opinions on the college and the department are good and lead to improvements in provision. For example, the new reception area for hairdressing and beauty therapy is the result of students' input and suggestions.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Teachers are effective in challenging equality and diversity matters as they arise. For example, in one lesson a student commented that the presenter of a DVD clip was 'gay'. The teacher challenged this statement appropriately, encouraging discussion about the need to avoid stereotyping. Data are used effectively to identify and remedy gaps in the achievement of different groups of students.

### **What does Bishop Auckland College need to do to improve further?**

- Build on the improvements in retention; monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies so that rates continue to improve.
- Improve the range of provision, including apprenticeships, and ensure that all students have good opportunities for progression to further levels of study or training.
- Tidy up all salons, rearrange displays and improve storage facilities to reflect best practice and provide a more professional and realistic work environment for students.

## Hospitality and catering

## Grade 2

### Context

41. The college offers full- and part-time vocational courses from entry to advanced level. Currently, just over 150 students are enrolled: 28 school pupils aged 14 to 16, 63 students aged 16 to 18, and 62 adults. Courses are offered from foundation to intermediate level in hospitality and from foundation to advanced level in professional cookery.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are good and on a few programmes they are outstanding. Success rates are high on many courses including on the diploma in introduction to Professional Cookery and on the National Vocation Qualification Professional Cookery at advanced level. Retention is high on most courses and at most levels. Pass rates are very high.
- Students make good progress and demonstrate skills appropriate to their level and ability on most courses. At foundation and intermediate level, students demonstrate good practical skills and subject knowledge. Students on advanced-level courses make satisfactory progress. Punctuality is good across all programmes. Attendance is satisfactory.
- Students benefit from a range of activities to raise aspirations and support their personal development. For example, students take the lead in running activities such as a mobile drinks service around college, a bread project sponsored by Warburton's and a 'Make, Shake and Bake' competition. Students visit local employers to extend their knowledge of the industry. However, work-placement opportunities are insufficient.
- Students feel safe at college and are aware of how to report any concerns. Students are taught and supported well in a safe environment. Safe working practices are embedded into teaching and learning. Students understand the importance of health and safety in the workplace.
- Teaching and learning are good. Characteristics of the best lessons include good planning, a variety of engaging activities, good pace and regular checks on learning. Teachers develop students' ability to work independently while still contributing as part of a cohesive team. They also make good use of their own experiences to enliven lessons and make learning an enjoyable experience. In the less effective lessons teachers make insufficient checks on learning activities and questioning lacks stretch and challenge.
- Assessment is good. Assignment briefs are written clearly. Practical assessment is timely and accurate. Most teachers offer good, detailed feedback, explaining how students can improve their work. Errors in work are corrected routinely.
- The level and range of programmes are satisfactory. Courses in professional cookery meet the needs of students and provide comprehensive knowledge of the industry and a good basis for students to make informed choices about their

future careers. However, the range of courses related to the food and beverage service is narrow and opportunities for progression are limited.

- Links with the community are good and partnerships with local schools and employers are strong. Working with regional and national partners, the department has successfully supported entry to work for unemployed people through the targeted delivery of catering qualifications.
- Support for students is good. Initial assessment identifies individual additional learning support needs accurately. Learning support assistants are effective and are involved closely in the lessons and support for students. Good individual support is provided in practical settings to aid development of skills. Students' progress is recorded electronically and linked carefully to individual learning plans that are reviewed regularly. Targets for a few students are insufficiently challenging.
- Accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms are well equipped and reflect industry standards, but a few rooms are cramped. The training restaurant has recently been refurbished and provides a realistic working environment for students to gain front-of-house experience.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. A culture of mutual respect is evident in and out of lessons; staff and students work very well together. A wide range of international food and cultures is promoted throughout the curriculum and staff use these to open up discussion on equality and diversity matters. Students enjoy the workshop demonstrations from chef lecturers in Thai, Moroccan and Nigerian cuisine.
- The college's response to students' views is good. A system of student representatives from each class ensures good two-way communication. Students feel that they are listened to; the implementation of lanyards for ID cards is a good example. Regular focus groups are held with students and feedback is used to improve the student experience.
- Management of the subject area is good. Following several changes in curriculum management, the area is now stable. Team working is strong and regular meetings promote best practice across teaching groups. Self-assessment is inclusive and broadly accurate. Targets set at course level are sufficiently challenging. Progress against targets is monitored rigorously.

### **What does Bishop Auckland College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve attendance through closer monitoring and a more precise attendance target for individual students.
- Develop work experience opportunities to extend students' range of vocational skills and to equip them successfully for future employment.
- Ensure that all teachers use good questioning techniques to check students' learning and progress. Provide a sufficient variety of activities to stretch and challenge all students.
- Review the curriculum offer to ensure that the level and range of programmes meet students' and employers' needs more effectively and enable them to progress to higher levels of study or training.

## Leisure, travel and tourism

## Grade 3

### Context

42. Currently around 90 students are following programmes in this area; most are aged 16 to 18 and study full time. Just over three quarters of all students are male. Courses are offered from foundation to advanced level in travel and tourism, sport and recreation, and coaching. The college also offers a range of short courses, including fitness instruction, football coaching and cabin crew skills.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. College data for 2010/11 indicate that college improvement strategies are working and having a positive impact. Success rates have improved across most programmes for students aged 16 to 18 and are at or slightly above the previous year's average. Success rates for young people on foundation courses and intermediate sports courses are high. However, success rates for adults remain low.
- Most pass rates are now above the 2009/10 average. Retention has improved markedly on many courses but remains low for adults on a few courses. The standard of students' work is good. Attendance is satisfactory.
- Students develop good personal and social skills through team building activities and vocationally relevant trips. Students say that they feel safe. A comprehensive tutorial programme promotes health and well-being effectively. Students are encouraged to eat healthily through a reward scheme in the college dining areas.
- Students make a good contribution to the community through many voluntary activities and fundraising events. Many students run sports coaching activities with local youth football teams and organise mini sports events for local primary school children. A fancy dress football competition to raise awareness of cancer and the many events to support children in need are good examples of students' fundraising activities.
- Teaching and learning are good and impacting positively on the improving standards in this area. Teachers use a range of activities effectively to help students develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. In the best lessons, teaching is at a brisk pace that enables students to make good progress.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and draw upon their industrial experiences to reinforce practical skills and working methods. In a minority of lessons, the pace of learning is slow and questioning to check students' understanding is infrequent.
- Student assessment is regular and fair. Teachers provide comprehensive feedback and advice on how students can improve their work further. Students' work and their progress are monitored carefully.

- Employer engagement is satisfactory. The department has made strenuous efforts in the past to include the views of employers when planning provision. However, there are currently no formal processes to capture employers' and other stakeholders' views to review, develop and inform the curriculum or to enhance students' vocational experience.
- Partnerships in football and sport are strong and underpin many positive curriculum developments. For example, established arrangements with two local high schools enhance the college's resources to the benefit of both college students and school pupils.
- Support for students is good. Drop-in sessions to support assignment work and assistance to improve grade profiles are valued highly by students. Good individual support is provided to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively and work with teachers to provide a collaborative learning environment that meets most individual students' needs.
- As part of the college's recent restructuring, a new manager for the area has been appointed. Strategies to raise achievement and improve retention are now securely in place and having a positive impact. Performance management has been strengthened. Regular team meetings monitor progress against key targets and prompt, swift intervention occurs when this is required.
- Opportunities for professional development are good. The self-assessment report is accurate and recognises key areas for improvement although these are not always sufficiently explicit in the curriculum report. However, data are used well to evaluate performance and to inform precise actions for improvement.
- Facilities for sport, including the sports fields, sports hall and classrooms, are good. However, the teaching area for travel and tourism lacks a clear identity and resources are adequate. The fitness suite, though fit for purpose, is small and the equipment is dated.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well in lessons and through regular events that raise awareness of diversity themes such as religious festivals. Students have a good understanding of equality and diversity and participate in regular discussions that question and challenge extremist views.

### **What does Bishop Auckland College need to do to improve further?**

- Build on improvements in retention, especially for adults, and identify where further targeted intervention is needed to ensure that previous low retention is reversed. Set individual targets for attendance and monitor these rigorously.
- Develop mechanisms to capture employers' views and use these to inform curriculum planning. Improve partnerships with employers to enhance and enrich the students' vocational experience so they can reinforce their employability skills.
- Update the equipment in the fitness suite and improve the facilities and resources in travel and tourism so that students' experiences are enhanced.

## Visual and performing arts

## Grade 3

### Context

43. The college has 107 students on full-time programmes in art and design, music and performing arts, from intermediate to advanced level. The majority of students are aged 16 to 18 and study full time. Just over 30 adults study part time. Provision is also made for school pupils aged 14 to 16 and for the local community.

### Key findings

- Overall success rates are satisfactory and improving. Retention, although improved, remains low on a few courses. Strategies for improving retention are in place and college data for 2010/11 and that seen during inspection indicate a trend of improvement. Pass rates are high and often very high on most long courses. However, pass rates on two-year art and design courses have been low. Pass rates are consistently high on short courses.
- Most students produce work of a good standard. Work is of a high standard in performing arts. Students on musical theatre programmes work very collaboratively to produce high-quality practical performance work. Theory teaching in music is thorough. On intermediate level art courses, students' experimental charcoal drawing work is especially sensitive. The standard of students' work in advanced level art is satisfactory. Work at this level is often insufficiently challenging and the range of presentation techniques is too narrow.
- Teaching and learning are good. Characteristics of the best lessons include detailed schemes of work and lesson plans that are accurately informed by individual and group profiles. Teaching is lively and delivered at a good pace. Students' understanding is checked regularly. In the few weaker lessons the level of challenge is insufficient, as is the use of directed questioning to check that all students understand new techniques and are making progress.
- Students receive detailed feedback and advice on how to improve their work in most areas. They are aware of their target grades and progress against them. Useful monitoring documents give a clear overview of progress. Teachers' individual support to students is good and helps them to improve their work. Students value this one-to-one support.
- General resources for the subject area are plentiful and teaching rooms are maintained well. The performing arts rooms and theatre are small for movement work but are adequate as current group sizes are small. Technical support for the area is not always timely and this hinders learning for students. Students' work is on display in the art corridor but it is not placed around other key college locations to impress and inspire. A few teaching rooms lack display of work to celebrate students' success, stimulate creativity and illustrate expected standards.

- Students are able to choose from a satisfactory range of provision, which is enhanced by additional qualifications. All the qualifications offered help to prepare students effectively for further study or progression to employment. Teachers provide good enrichment activities including many trips to art galleries, visiting speakers and workshops.
- Support for students is good. Additional learning support is thoroughly embedded in most lessons. Students with specific learning needs are supported effectively by teaching staff and learning support assistants to help them progress in their studies. Students receiving support stay on their courses and succeed. Improvements to initial advice and guidance are impacting positively; current data indicate improving retention.
- Curriculum leadership is strong. The new curriculum manager has set high expectations and works closely with teaching staff to raise standards. The key priority for improvement is retention, and this is fully understood. It is too soon to judge the full impact of the range of improvement strategies but already the proportion of good and better teaching has increased and retention is improving. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. However, it does not identify all the areas for improvement.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and well embedded throughout the area. Assignment briefs, practical work, musical outputs and performances all incorporate multi-cultural themes. Teachers use opportunities that arise in lessons to challenge where appropriate and to raise awareness of equality and diversity matters.
- Students feel safe at the college and behaviour is good in the majority of lessons. Relationships between most staff and students are good with high levels of mutual respect.

### **What does of Bishop Auckland College need to do to improve further?**

- Embed fully the strategies already implemented to improve success rates further, especially on advanced art and design courses. Use in-year retention data more routinely to monitor trends and inform speedy intervention.
- In art and design teaching, provide more stretch and challenge. Broaden the range of techniques taught so that all students develop the artistic skills needed to help them succeed and achieve better grades.
- Ensure the prompt repair of technical equipment in music and performing arts so that students do not have their learning interrupted or slowed down.
- Improve the display of creative work in public areas of the college so that students' success can be celebrated more widely. In art classrooms increase the amount of students' work on display to stimulate creativity and to increase students' awareness of expected standards.

## Information about the inspection

44. Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the college's vice principal, 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 funding bodies, 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.
45. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and emails to gain the views of students and employers. They also looked at questionnaires students and employers had recently completed for the provider. They 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)**  
**Bishop Auckland College**  
**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Student 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 <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Student responsive	19+ Student responsive	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled students</b>					
Full-time students	1691	0	1016	675	0
Part-time students	6630	181	751	4157	1541
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2				
<b>Outcomes for students</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
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				
<i>Are students able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do students make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3				
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				
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>				
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	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				

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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