

Barnfield College

General further education college

Inspection dates		17 – 21 November 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate-4
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Inadequate-4
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Inadequate-4
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Inadequate-4

Summary of key findings for learners

This college is inadequate because:

- too few learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes at all levels complete their qualifications successfully and success rates are low for adult learners, as well as for apprentices training in the workplace
- attendance, punctuality and behaviour are poor
- the significant majority of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement, or is inadequate
- learners make slow progress in lessons as a result of tutors' poor planning for learning and insufficient attention to the needs of individual learners
- teaching and learning in English and mathematics are poor, both in discrete lessons and when taught alongside learners' main studies
- too few learners on study programmes have sufficient opportunities to take part in work placements to improve their work readiness and employment prospects
- self-assessment is unrealistic and does not accurately identify the impact of poor teaching, learning and assessment and inadequate leadership and management on learners' outcomes
- senior managers are unable to evaluate the effectiveness of the college's courses in meeting local and regional skills needs, as they do not know the destinations of enough learners when they finish their studies.

This college has the following strengths:

- no key strengths.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve?

- Ensure that attendance is consistently good in all subject areas and that learners understand the importance of arriving at lessons on time and ready to study as an important part of developing their work readiness. Emphasise to tutors the importance of setting clear expectations about attendance and punctuality and the urgent need to challenge learners' poor behaviour around the main campus, including their adherence to college rules.
- Implement immediate training to provide tutors with better teaching skills to improve all areas of their classroom practice. Ensure that training enables them to understand how to improve the planning of learning through focusing on fulfilling learners' potential in lessons and having higher expectations of what learners can achieve. Urgently re-evaluate the way in which lesson observers make judgements so that senior managers have an accurate view of standards of classroom practice and know what actions to take to bring about rapid improvements in teaching.
- Urgently improve teaching and learning in both discrete English and mathematics lessons and in classes where they are taught alongside learners' main subjects. Ensure tutors make topics more interesting and relevant to learners' main areas of study, set clear expectations for learners as regards attendance at, and behaviour in, lessons and focus more on developing learners' skills in lessons.
- Develop partnerships with employers to arrange work placements for learners in subjects where they currently do not exist so that learners can experience the commercial demands of the workplace.
- Urgently change the way in which senior managers self-assess the college, both overall and in subject areas, so that judgements reflect standards of provision accurately and explain the relationship between learners' outcomes and the quality of teaching and leadership and management.
- Take immediate steps to find out learners' destinations once they leave the college, and particularly whether they enter full- or part-time employment, so that managers can evaluate accurately whether courses offered meet learners' needs, as well as those of employers, both locally and nationally.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Inadequate
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- The college provides study programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 at levels 1, 2 and 3, and these make up around 40% of the provision. The majority of adult learners are on full- and part-time courses at level 1. The numbers of apprentices are increasing, but they make up only a small proportion of the college's learners. The highest numbers of enrolments are in construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy and on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses.
- Success rates are inadequate. The proportion of learners aged 16 to 18 on college-based courses who achieve their qualifications has declined dramatically over the past year, particularly on study programmes at level 1. Too few learners aged 16 to 18 complete their study programmes at all levels. Success rates are very low in the significant majority of subjects, and require improvement in the remainder. School pupils aged 14 to 16 who attend courses at the college have performed poorly for the past two years.

- Too few adult learners achieve their qualifications successfully. Success rates are very low on courses at level 1 and level 2. While the decline in learners' success rates on courses at level 3 is less of an issue than at other levels, they are still low. Adult learners perform well in a small number of subjects, including health and social care, but success rates are very low in engineering, construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Success rates are high for adult learners on short courses in subcontracted provision.
- Progress made by most learners studying at the college requires improvement. They make good progress in health and social care and on visual arts and media courses at levels 1 and 2. By contrast, learners' progress is poor in hairdressing, beauty therapy, English, mathematics and for learners on ESOL courses. Very few learners on study programmes at level 2 or level 3 achieve high grades for their main qualification, particularly in public services and construction.
- A much-increased number of learners are studying GCSEs in English and mathematics in 2014/15. Very few of the very small cohort of learners who took GCSEs in 2013/14 achieved them at grades A* to C. Staff enrolled too many learners who should have studied GCSE mathematics on courses for functional skills at level 1 in the same subject. Functional skills success rates are similarly low for younger learners on study programmes taking English and mathematics courses at levels 1 and 2. Nevertheless, a high proportion of learners on entry level functional skills courses achieve their qualifications, particularly those on programmes for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of learners returning to the college in 2014/15 to do a second study programme did not progress to a higher-level functional skill or to GCSEs in English and mathematics. The development of learners' English and mathematics skills alongside their main studies is too inconsistent and requires improvement.
- Attendance is poor. It varies too much between different subject areas. Learners do not arrive on time in a significant proportion of lessons. Their behaviour is disruptive in too many classes, and particularly in English and mathematics lessons. Learners feel safe around the college, but express concerns regarding the security around the exterior of the main campus. Standards of behaviour in public areas are good at the technology campus, but are poor at the main site.
- Learners undertake work placements in very few subjects. Ways in which tutors encourage learners to have the right attitudes for the world of work vary too much in lessons and require improvement. Initiatives to develop learners' employability skills outside lessons are successful in a small number of subject areas, including construction and public services. The number of cross-college enterprise activities is increasing, enabling learners to take part in projects such as mentoring schemes and voluntary work. A small number of learners have been very successful in gaining gold and silver medals at prestigious national and international skills events. Staff responsible for cross-college sport have implemented a number of successful activities to bring learners together from different parts of the college to introduce them to new sports and to encourage them to lead healthy lives.
- Success rates for apprentices are inadequate. Numbers of apprentices completing their qualification in the timescale planned for them when they started their training have declined over the past two years and are very low. While learners on intermediate apprenticeships in administration and business management achieve well, too few apprentices in early years, motor vehicle and who are training to become teaching assistants complete their qualifications successfully.
- College managers have partially succeeded in reducing differences in achievement between very diverse groups of learners. Male learners perform worse than their female peers, largely because of poor success rates in engineering and construction. They also achieve much less successfully than women in visual arts and business management. Some groups of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve better than their peers, most notably young Pakistani and African learners. By contrast, success rates are very low for adult learners from the Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean communities. Learners identified as requiring

additional learning support perform better than their peers within the college, but worse than their counterparts nationally. The small cohort of learners who were formerly looked after children achieve well.

- Managers have been unsuccessful in capturing data on learners' destinations when they leave the college. The proportion of unknown destinations is too high, particularly for apprentices. As a result, the college has a very low recorded rate of progression for learners to employment. A high proportion of learners on study programmes progress to further courses. By contrast, progression from study programmes at level 2 and 3 requires improvement. While progression to higher education is particularly good in computing and music, too few learners on courses at level 3 overall progress to university or to other higher education courses within the college.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The main aim of the college is to provide vocational courses to enable learners to gain employment in the local region. The seven subject areas inspected and reported on represent a sample of the college's most significant provision. Inspectors evaluated study programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 and foundation mathematics, reflecting current government priorities. Inspectors also inspected in detail the college's apprenticeships in hairdressing.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate, which is reflected in the very low proportion of learners and apprentices who achieve their qualifications. Very few learners obtain high grades in their studies. Too few tutors and assessors have sufficiently high expectations of their learners. They do not plan lessons or training sessions that enable learners to make consistently good progress, both in lessons and with their qualifications. The proportion of good or better teaching in the college is very low.
- Staff accurately assess learners' starting points when they join the college, but tutors fail to take the prior attainment of learners into account when planning learning activities. In too many lessons, tutors do not challenge learners to work hard enough. Activities do not interest learners and they often do not understand what it is they need to do. As a result, their progress is slow, they become bored and disinterested and, in a minority of cases, learners misbehave. Assessors' setting of individual targets for unit completion by apprentices does not take into account their prior knowledge, skills or opportunities for learning in the workplace.
- In the small proportion of good or better lessons, tutors motivate learners well with their enthusiasm for the subject, using activities that learners find interesting, relevant and challenging. As a result, learners make good, or better, progress both in and outside lessons. These tutors also set learners regular homework, which links directly to learning in lessons and helps learners to develop independence and to think for themselves. For example, in an outstanding electrical engineering lesson, learners located faults in electrical circuits independently and worked on progressively more challenging problems, while receiving prompt and developmental feedback from the tutor.
- Learners' development of practical skills requires improvement. In the better subjects, such as plastering, learners quickly develop their skills to industry standards. However, in too many subjects, such as hairdressing and visual arts, learners' development of their practical skills is slow. Too few learners have the opportunity to develop their practical skills through taking part in a relevant work placement. Apprentices who are training in the workplace benefit from more frequent opportunities to acquire good practical skills and those on advanced apprenticeships in subjects such as hairdressing develop their skills very well.
- Assessment requires improvement. Tutors' assessment of learners' work is accurate, but the feedback to learners about their work varies considerably in quality and effectiveness. The best feedback identifies what learners do well and what they need to do to improve.

However, in too many cases, feedback is brief, infrequent and does not clearly identify what learners need to do to improve their work and to make better progress. In a small minority of cases, tutors do not identify what learners' need to do to improve their incorrect spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- Tutors' development of learners' English and mathematics skills is inadequate. Too few learners find English and mathematics lessons interesting, or relevant. Tutors are not sufficiently skilful at helping learners develop industry-relevant vocabulary or mathematics skills. In the minority of better lessons, tutors ensure that learners are able to use, spell and understand relevant vocabulary.
- Tutors' use of information and learning technology (ILT) to make learning interesting and to reinforce important theory learning is inadequate. Too few tutors use ILT, such as interactive whiteboards and the virtual learning environment (VLE), sufficiently well to help enliven lessons and to enable learners to undertake further learning outside the classroom. The small minority of tutors who use ILT well provide resources on the VLE, which include instructional videos, links to relevant web sites and quizzes; these reinforce, and build on, what learners do in lessons. However, too often, tutors use the VLE as a repository for documents they give to learners in lessons, rather than to enable further learning.
- Support for learners with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities requires improvement. Those learners who need extra help with their learning, particularly for those on courses at level 2 and below, receive effective support in lessons from learning support assistants. However, in too many cases, support staff do not know what the lesson is about in advance and have no time to adapt resources or to develop appropriate strategies to help learners fulfil their potential. A number of learning support assistants who provide help for learners with learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or Asperger's syndrome, have not received any specific training in how to support them.
- Tutors care about the learners they support and learners value this support highly. However, tutors do not set sufficiently challenging targets in tutorials to enable learners to understand what it is they need to do to improve in lessons, to complete assignments to a higher standard and to behave well. Tutors provide good guidance to learners to support their career progression. Learners on courses at level 3 who want to progress to higher education receive very good support from their tutors on how to apply for places.
- Tutors' development of learners' understanding of the diversity of the communities in which they live is insufficient and requires improvement. In subjects such as art, tutors use a wide range of resources and sources from different genres and cultures to increase learners' awareness of diversity. However, the majority of learners do not improve their understanding of different cultures and lifestyles or what it means to live in present-day Britain.

Health and Social Care

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. While success rates for adult learners are high, outcomes for those aged 16 to 18 require improvement. Learners achieve particularly well on courses at level 3, but less so on courses at level 1 and 2. High success rates for learners on the access to higher education in health studies course enabled all of them to progress to degree level studies in higher education in 2013/14. Attendance in lessons requires improvement, although punctuality for those who do attend is good. Not enough learners achieve high grades at the end of their studies.

- While a small minority of teaching is outstanding, the majority requires improvement; in a few lessons, it is inadequate. In the best lessons, tutors focus very effectively on good development of learners' employability skills. Learners acquire good practical skills in health and social care and a clear understanding of the professional standards needed to work in the wide range of industry settings. These learners benefit from tutors' high expectations, support and motivation. For example, learners on a pre-access health and social care course value the opportunity to join the access to higher education groups for presentations by visiting speakers from the local university and social services. This enables them to discover the range of career options and further education opportunities available to them once they complete their courses at college.
- In weaker lessons, tutors do not take sufficient account of learners' pre-existing experience and knowledge when planning learning. Teaching is poorly organised and lessons lack a clear structure. Tutors do not encourage learners to share examples from their personal experiences in the workplace and as volunteers to bring theory learning to life and to help their peers develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Tutors are well qualified, but too many lack the necessary range of professional experience to be able to share relevant examples from the workplace with learners in lessons. A small minority of tutors monitor learners' progress well, providing them with the personal support and encouragement they need to improve their self-confidence. In a particularly good lesson, the tutor supported learners very effectively to explore ways in which to overcome the barriers to communication that service users may experience.
- The use of ILT by both tutors and learners is weak and requires improvement. The majority of tutors only use electronic slide presentations in lessons and do not attempt to broaden learners' knowledge of other types of ILT. They do not plan learning sufficiently well to encourage learners to use ILT for independent research. For example, in a lesson where the tutor required the learners to use ILT to carry out research, they did not have access to enough fully charged laptops.
- Meeting the needs of individual learners requires improvement. Tutors do not use outcomes of initial assessment sufficiently well to formulate learners' individual learning plans. As a result, too many learners do not fulfil their potential, as tutors are unable to set them accurate short-term targets and long-term learning goals. Tutors do not incorporate learners' progress in English and mathematics into the regular reviews they have with learners.
- Assessment requires improvement. In the majority of lessons, tutors do not pay sufficient attention to assessing the progress of individual learners, who lose interest and become demotivated. The marking of learners' work lacks sufficient guidance on how to improve it to achieve higher grades. By contrast, the best assessment practice is characterised by tutors who give learners clear oral feedback about their assessed work, supported by detailed written feedback that helps them to improve their grades and to develop their referencing and academic writing skills.
- Tutors' development of learners' English and mathematics skills requires improvement. They are not sufficiently skilful at integrating the teaching of English and mathematics into vocational lessons. Learners who have already gained GCSEs in English and mathematics at grades A* to C and who attend functional skills lessons to maintain their skills levels, quickly become frustrated and bored, as the teaching does not cater for their specific needs. By contrast, tutors in the small minority of better lessons take every opportunity to develop learners' speaking, listening and presentation skills, as well as increasing their confidence in the use of relevant professional terminology. Learners value the importance of mathematics as an employability skill. For example, in a good mathematics lesson, adult learners had fun while gaining confidence in understanding the use of decimals and percentages.
- Support for learners is good. Staff involve parents and carers fully in meetings about any problems concerning learners and keep them informed of learners' progress. The college's central support team is very responsive in helping learners who have personal concerns or problems. While most learners find their own work placements or volunteering opportunities,

this restricts the range of options available to them to explore career aspirations in sectors of the industry with which they are less familiar.

- Arrangements for safeguarding learners are good. They understand the importance of giving a high priority to the personal safety of clients in the community and in professional settings. Learners feel safe around the college and treat each other, and tutors, with respect and courtesy.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity requires improvement. A lack of specific initial assessment and support for a minority of learners for whom English is their second language hinders them in developing the necessary language skills required in professional health and social care settings. The ways in which tutors weave themes relating to equality into lessons vary too much. In the best examples, tutors develop learners' understanding of equality well through recognising the importance of equal access to services and support for groups of people from different cultures and backgrounds.
- Learners have a good understanding of diversity. Tutors encourage learners to think about cultural diversity in lessons. For example, in Black History Month, learners used poetry to explore and reflect on their feelings about challenges faced by black people throughout history. In a project on nursing in wartime, learners on the access to higher education course researched the public's perceptions during the nineteenth century of the contributions made by both Mary Seacole, a black Jamaican nurse, and Florence Nightingale.

Building and Construction

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate, as reflected in learners' very low success rates. While learners make better progress in workshop sessions than in theory classes, learners make slow progress overall because too much teaching fails to inspire and challenge them to work hard.
- In the majority of lessons, tutors do not plan learning well and do not set learners demanding tasks and as a result, most remain uninterested because they have too little work to do. Tutors do not have sufficiently high expectations for what learners can achieve and are unclear about how to help them to make progress in lessons. The focus in the majority of lessons is on preparing learners to pass examinations, rather than developing learners' full understanding of the subject.
- In a small number of good theory lessons, tutors involve learners well, enabling them to acquire new knowledge and skills quickly. These lessons have tutors who plan lessons carefully to ensure learners make good progress.
- The development of learners' employability skills is inadequate. They make few notes in theory lessons to help them recall important information. Portfolios of work are untidy and poorly structured. The majority of learners do not routinely wear high visibility jackets, safety glasses or gloves when working on practical tasks. A small minority of learners enjoy good opportunities to develop realistic work skills in commercial environments. Others benefit from well-planned work experience on community and charity projects, particularly in painting and decorating.
- In a minority of lessons in workshops, learners make good progress and produce work to industry standards. In a particularly good plastering lesson, learners produced mouldings to a high standard and accurately set out templates to match existing work. They understood how they would apply these skills in the workplace.

- Tutors have good industrial experience, which they use well to provide relevant anecdotal examples in their teaching. A small number of new tutors have recently joined the college, bringing current industry practice, which they impart effectively in lessons, particularly in developing learners' craft skills.
- Learners' behaviour in lessons is very good. They show high levels of respect for their tutors and peers and provide good support for each other. While those learners who attend lessons arrive on time, attendance overall is poor.
- Tutors do not use ILT to its full potential to help learners improve their understanding of practical tasks or important construction concepts. They do not encourage learners to use ILT for online research when working independently inside and outside the classroom. Tutors do not make good use of interactive boards to enliven and add variety to lessons, and workshops do not have ILT facilities to support learning.
- Initial assessment has improved from the previous year, but requires improvement. Tutors are now more involved in the recruitment of learners, which ensures they enrol on the right course to meet their needs. While learners who receive additional support make better progress than their peers do overall, tutors do not involve learning support staff sufficiently well in the planning of lessons to ensure these learners fulfil their potential.
- Assessment requires improvement. Most learners receive good oral feedback on how to improve their skills in lessons, but written feedback in assessed work is poor and does not tell learners what they need to do to improve their assignments to gain higher grades. Marking of learners' work is imprecise. While tutors correct poor technical knowledge, they do not advise learners how to improve their spelling and grammar.
- Tutors' work to develop learners' English and mathematics skills in both discrete lessons and in vocational classes is inadequate. Frequent staff changes have had a detrimental effect on learners' confidence in developing relationships with tutors who can help them understand English and mathematics. As a result, most learners do not acquire an appreciation of how English and mathematics can help them at work. Construction tutors have a limited understanding of the mathematics knowledge learners require to help them achieve their qualifications. A very small minority of tutors make good use of information about learners gathered from initial assessment and interviews to weave English and mathematics skilfully into their teaching.
- Learners' progression requires improvement. The vast majority of learners do not progress to higher-level programmes. While a small proportion of learners leave their study programme early to enrol on apprenticeships, managers do not have sufficient knowledge of the destinations of all learners.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in learning is inadequate. Tutors fail to equip learners with knowledge of scenarios relating to equality and diversity that they might experience when working in industry. Tutors promote good awareness of health and safety in workshops and learners feel safe.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes
Apprenticeships

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate, which reflects the very low proportion of learners who complete their qualifications successfully. Success rates are low on the majority of vocational courses, on apprenticeships and in English and mathematics. By contrast, the majority of beauty therapy learners on courses at level 2 achieve their qualification and advanced apprentices develop good employability skills in the workplace. Staff care about their learners, but poor attendance and too much ineffective teaching and learning result in the slow development of learners' occupational and employability skills overall.
- Tutors do not receive information about learners' academic and support needs when they enrol on courses. As a result, the content of lessons does not match all learners' needs. Too many tutors do not share intended learning aims of lessons so that learners can recognise and evaluate their progress. Although tutors set homework to support the acquisition of knowledge, they do not use it effectively to help learners prepare for new topics or revision tests. Tutors do not ensure learners fully understand topics before moving on to the more complex aspects of the subject they are teaching.
- In the small minority of good lessons, tutors plan learning that effectively builds on learners' existing knowledge. They use a good range of resources to extend learners' understanding, which enables them to adapt services and provide clients with good advice and guidance. Learners on hairdressing courses at level 3 use tonal values confidently to provide advice to clients on how to correct unwanted colour tones. Learners on beauty therapy courses at level 2 are able to describe how contouring will help clients improve facial features and the factors that will adapt day make-up to evening wear.
- Tutors' use of technology in lessons is poor and mostly restricted to sharing information through presentations. While tablet computers are available in break-out areas, they do not incorporate links to the college's VLE or other useful online learning resources. Learners in the college and apprentices in the workplace both make good use of e-portfolios, routinely using mobile technology to transfer evidence to them. One apprentice observed during the inspection used a tablet device very effectively as a visual aid for a client when choosing a hairstyle.
- The development of skills to support employment is poor for learners on study programmes. In a significant minority of lessons, learners arrive with no paper and pens to make notes, or any reference books. Tutors fail to challenge learners in beauty therapy lessons who wear nail varnish, jewellery and jeans rather than the standard uniform and who leave their coats under styling units. Learners in hairdressing work with equipment that they place untidily on worktops.
- The college salon provides learners with sufficient clients to meet their assessment requirements. However, the salon does not replicate the professional standards and challenges of a commercial workplace and learners do not take part in external work placements to enable them to experience these pressures elsewhere. Learners on intermediate apprenticeships do not develop their communication and client care skills quickly enough to standards expected by employers. Learners lack the confidence and language skills to carry out client consultations appropriately. In the better hairdressing salons in the workplace, staff provide apprentices with very helpful support and access to additional training.

- Tutors' attention to health and safety requires improvement. In a minority of lessons, it is unacceptable. Learners on beauty therapy courses do not systematically include sterilisation products on their equipment trolleys. Brushes are not always sterilised before learners use them on different clients and they use the same cleansing pads to remove make-up from both eyes. In hairdressing, styling trolleys are dirty, and they have congealed products left on them from the previous service.
- Tutors' strategies for the development of learners' English and mathematics skills are inadequate, both in discrete lessons and when taught alongside learners' main subject. Tutors do not take sufficient account of learners' individual needs or precise areas of improvement and learning styles when planning their teaching. Learners do not understand the benefit of studying these subjects and attendance in lessons is poor. Learners who have already achieved a grade C at GCSE and who want to improve their grades further are not set work that is challenging enough. As a result, they become disinterested and cause disruption in lessons. In a small minority of vocational lessons, tutors help learners to develop their communication skills to industry standards through correction of inappropriate phraseology and re-enforcement of appropriate terminology. However, the integration of mathematics with vocational teaching is inadequate.
- Assessment requires improvement. While tutors compile detailed assessment records that show learners' progress in a minority of lessons, they do not use the information to plan their teaching to meet learners' individual needs. Assessment in the workplace for apprentices is too variable and requires improvement. In the best examples, staff plan assessment particularly well, resulting in thorough reviews of all aspects of apprentices' progress. Less effective assessment has too little input from learners who make slow progress towards targets set in reviews.
- The support which staff provide for learning requires improvement. Learning support assistants provide effective in-class support for young learners who have additional learning needs. However, too many adult learners who speak English as their second language do not receive the support necessary to ensure they always take an active role in lessons.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Tutors successfully create a culture of respect and co-operation amongst learners, resulting in good teamwork. However, learners' understanding of the range of different clients' needs and backgrounds that they might experience in the workplace is insufficient.

Visual arts and media

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in the low numbers of learners who achieved their qualifications in 2013/14. This was a particular issue on courses at level 2, where a large proportion of both media and art and design learners left very early in the academic year because of a poor management decision to combine learners at levels 1 and 2 on the same course. However, of the learners on courses at level 2 who did complete their studies, a significant proportion achieved their qualifications. Success rates are high for learners on art and design courses at level 3.
- A significant minority of tutors provide lessons that do not enable learners to make good progress. In these lessons, tutors do not use a suitably wide range of interesting and varied activities to keep learners motivated and focused on their work. Lessons lack a clear structure, with poorly defined objectives and outcomes, and classroom management is poor. Tutors do not plan tasks and extension activities that help learners with different abilities to

make good progress. As a result, learners become bored and distracted and do not concentrate sufficiently well on completing work to the best of their ability.

- In the best lessons, tutors motivate and support learners very effectively to make rapid progress, to develop good vocational skills and to create work to a high standard. Tutors carefully plan a wide range of well-structured, interesting and challenging assignments, activities and tasks that meet the needs of individual learners well. Tutors are knowledgeable and passionate about their specialism and encourage learners to do their best through regular, detailed and supportive feedback on their work. Behaviour, attendance and punctuality in these lessons are good. Tutors and learners work together harmoniously and with mutual respect.
- Learners work well independently when tutors give them clearly structured tasks and activities. For instance, in a particularly good photography lesson, learners used a range of software tools to manipulate confidently images to illustrate basic rules of composition and colour theory. However, a minority of second-year art and design learners have not fully developed sufficient confidence or creative skills to work independently as required at this stage in their course.
- Learners develop a good range of skills through working on live briefs for internal and external clients. For instance, art and design learners developed good skills in team working, collaboration, design and display strategy when working for the local museum to create an exhibition on the theme of World War One. Second-year media learners gain valuable industry experience when they produce work for external clients, including local production companies.
- Tutors' assessment practices require improvement. Learners do not set short-term targets for themselves in lessons to ensure they make rapid progress. As a result, they do not always use their time in lessons effectively, spending too long on simple tasks before moving on to more complex or sophisticated activities. The marking of learners' work is too variable and requires improvement. Tutors do not always correct grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in learners' assignments to improve their English; others correct work thoroughly with clear advice and guidance on how to avoid common mistakes such as the wrong use of the words 'there' and 'their'. Tutors ensure that learners are aware of their target grades and give useful and detailed oral and written feedback both on work in progress and completed assignments that enable learners to improve their work.
- Learners have access to studios, workshops and resources for learning of a high standard. Tutors use paper-based resources, such as handouts and work-sheets, very effectively to support learning. High-calibre specialist facilities, equipment and materials enable learners to develop their skills well in many disciplines. For example, in a very good art and design lesson, learners explored a range of printing and textile techniques, including etching, to support and develop their work on non-European art forms. However, tutors do not use electronic media, such as interactive white boards and the VLE, creatively to enrich and enliven learning.
- Tutors' strategies to develop learners' skills and knowledge in discrete English and mathematics lessons fail to motivate them sufficiently, particularly in mathematics classes. Similarly, tutors are not skilled at weaving English and mathematics into vocational lessons. They fail to stimulate learners' interest, or to plan activities that meet their individual needs. As a result, learners become bored, do not make sufficient progress and do not develop the skills they need. Learners in vocational lessons do not routinely practise their writing and note taking skills. Tutors do not encourage learners to use sophisticated and extensive vocabulary to express their views and opinions, or to evaluate critically their own work and that of their peers.
- Tutors are now more effective in ensuring that learners enrol on the most appropriate course to meet their needs. As a result, the number of learners who leave their courses early has declined substantially since the previous year. However, the advice and guidance learners receive require improvement in order to increase the proportion that progress to higher-level

courses within the college. Progression to higher education is good, particularly in art and design.

- The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is good. For example, learners in a themed tutorial conducted a mature and interesting discussion on prejudice and stereotyping that directly related to their own experiences of living in Luton. Tutors ensure that learners gain an understanding of culturally diverse work through imaginative projects. Learners feel safe in college and know how to report any safeguarding concerns.

ESOL

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. This reflects the low success rates for learners and their lack of progression to higher levels of language study, vocational learning or employment.
- Most tutors do not have high enough expectations of learners' spoken language, standards of presentation and content of written work. They do not routinely encourage learners to organise their work so they can recap their previous learning and reinforce new vocabulary and grammatical structures for improved communication. Too often, tutors accept feedback from learners in poorly constructed sentences and do not model accurate English effectively enough.
- Learners do not practise accurate stress on words or repeat intonation patterns sufficiently. Tutors do not develop these skills with learners even when activities lend themselves to it. Therefore, learners do not develop these skills sufficiently, with the result that their pronunciation is not accurate enough, which hinders effective communication.
- In too many lessons, tutors do not plan effectively to improve learners' skills. While they benefit from working on interesting topics that are relevant to living and working in Britain, tutors do not clearly explain the ways in which they want these activities to develop learners' language skills. Lessons focus on the completion of tasks rather than the development of language fluency and accuracy. Learners work on a limited range of activities regardless of their ability, usually only consisting of unimaginative worksheets. Tutors do not motivate learners to work hard and, as a result, they make slow progress in lessons as they lose concentration waiting for others to finish.
- In a small minority of lessons, tutors design activities well to get the best from learners. Learners benefit from much small group and pair work to practise speaking and listening skills. Tutors plan a range of carefully structured tasks at differing levels and set clear skills-based objectives. In a very successful lesson, learners worked hard and absorbed themselves in learning about money management through clever use of songs, a customised financial game and interesting grammatical and reading exercises. As a result, they extended their technical vocabulary and participated in a very well-informed, fluent discussion about key money management issues.
- Learners have good access to computers to practise their language skills further through research tasks, but they do not develop sufficiently accurate proof-reading skills. Their completed work often includes too many errors. Tutors do not routinely prompt learners to use online learning resources to improve their listening skills, comprehension and pronunciation.
- Identification of learners' starting points requires improvement. Tutors are assiduous in gathering information on learners' personal circumstances, as well as their previous educational experiences, ensuring they enrol on appropriate courses. However, tutors do not

compile sufficiently detailed profiles on learners to guide their lesson planning and to ensure that all learners achieve their full potential and can build on their previous knowledge.

- Learners do not take enough responsibility for their own learning. A high proportion are too dependent on tutors for direction in lessons. Tutors spend too long directing questions around the whole group which slows their progress, rather than encouraging learners to work with their peers to check their own learning and to reflect on those aspects they still need to improve. Tutors do not set most learners detailed enough targets to maintain their progress effectively. Individual tutorials are not frequent enough to support less confident learners to progress well in their studies.
- Learners aged 16 to 18 on study programmes do not have mathematics lessons. However, learners practise their mathematics skills on an informal basis in lessons regularly. Not all tutors have the skills and experience to meet fully the needs of learners who have limited reading abilities. This results in a significant minority of learners making slow progress in lessons and hinders their progression to higher level courses. Young learners do not take part in work experience and are therefore unsure of the expectations and levels of communication required in the workplace.
- Information, advice and guidance require improvement. Learners do not fully understand all the information they receive at the start of their courses. While most learners benefit from taking part in vocational lessons in, for example, sports, arts, business, drama and hairdressing, too many subject tutors are not sufficiently skilled at extending learners' verbal skills. Learners do not receive effective enough language support when they progress to full-time vocational learning. Learners understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in learning and at work. As a result, attendance rates have increased this year and are high.
- Tutors promote equality well through their teaching so learners feel safe, behave well and treat others with respect. Learners develop a sound understanding of cultural differences and a good appreciation of different ways of thinking about various aspects of everyday life. Learners are keen to improve their knowledge and understanding of life in Britain. However, not all tutors use a wide enough range of teaching strategies to meet the different learning needs and abilities of their learners.

Foundation mathematics

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Inadequate

- Teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate, as reflected in the low success rates for functional skills mathematics at levels 1 and 2. Lessons are insufficiently challenging and lack variety. Tutors' infrequent checks on learning result in the large majority of learners making slower progress than they should. Attendance in mathematics lessons is poor.
- Teaching is not good enough to inspire learners to improve their mathematics skills. Learners do not understand, or value, the contribution that mathematics can make to improve their employment prospects. Tutors' lesson planning is ineffective in enabling individual learners to make the progress they should in developing their mathematics skills and applying them to a wide range of contexts. Learning is too slow for a minority of learners, and too quick for others. For example, in lessons where learners practise rounding up and down of decimals, the more able finish the task quickly without being set further complex tasks. In other lessons, tutors provide learners with tasks that are too advanced and they struggle to understand how, for example, to use equivalencies between common fractions, decimals and percentages. As a result, they make slow progress in understanding important mathematics concepts, quickly lose interest in the lesson and become bored.

- Tutors of functional skills use a narrow range of learning activities in lessons, relying too much on uninspiring worksheets, which are ineffective in supporting learners to acquire, select and apply mathematics techniques to solve problems. In a small minority of classes, tutors plan learning activities that are more interesting and learners enjoy discussions about relevant topics, encouraging them to draw the correct conclusions and to apply theory to practice. As a result, learners gain a clear understanding of how to apply mathematics concepts to solve numerical problems.
- Most mathematics tutors lack experience and training to enable them to be effective in teaching functional skills and GCSE mathematics. A small minority of tutors are inexperienced in the craft of teaching. They lack strategies for effective classroom management and do not have sufficient knowledge of how to plan good learning especially when class sizes are large. and classrooms are too small to accommodate the number of learners attending the lesson. In a majority of classes, many of which take place in rooms set up for computing lessons, learners have insufficient desk space for them to work effectively.
- Tutors make insufficient use of ILT to enrich learners' experiences of mathematics by exploring the impact of technology in solving numerical problems pertinent to their vocational subjects. For example, hairdressing learners do not use software to calculate how many clients they would need to service to generate a profit for the salon and then to compare their answers to their original estimations. Tutors make little use of the interactive white boards in classrooms to improve teaching and learning.
- The use of learners' English and mathematics initial assessment results to plan learning is inadequate. Tutors do not take sufficient account of learners' strengths and areas for improvement when planning lessons and homework to ensure that learners advance their mathematics skills beyond their starting points. They do not set targets for learners that are sufficiently challenging, realistic and achievable to enable them to fulfil their potential in mathematics.
- Assessment practice is inadequate. Tutors do not check learners' understanding of mathematics concepts thoroughly enough by providing opportunities for them to apply and demonstrate their skills in different contexts. Most tutors rely too much on direct questions to check learning, which are too infrequent to be effective and do not involve all learners. The marking of learners' work does not routinely incorporate feedback about their performance and what they need to do to improve their answers. Target setting is inadequate to support learners in developing their skills. A significant proportion of learners are unclear about how well they are progressing in mathematics.
- The development and monitoring of learners' English skills in mathematics lessons is inadequate. For example, a large majority of learners demonstrate particularly poor communication skills and use unacceptable language, which tutors do not routinely correct. Tutors do not act as good role models to learners wanting to improve their English and mathematics skills. A number have poor handwriting and spelling skills when explaining mathematics functions to the class, resulting in learners struggling to decipher what the tutor has written.
- Information, advice and guidance require improvement. Learners do not receive accurate information about how functional skills will contribute to the success of their study programmes and other aspects of their lives. Induction does not prepare learners for a commitment to learning mathematics and a large majority of learners are apathetic about developing their skills.

Learners' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity require improvement. Tutors do not provide sufficient opportunities to reinforce and deepen learners' understanding of relevant topics during lessons. Learners often do not show respect, or tolerance, for tutors and their peers. They frequently demonstrate poor listening skills as other learners express opinions about a topic. Learners with disabilities integrate well into mathematics lessons and they receive good assistance from learning support tutors who are experienced in sign language communication.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate. The college has been through a period of major change under the leadership of interim senior leaders and staffing levels have been reduced significantly. Despite managers now being clearer about the direction of the college, this change has been accompanied by a substantial decline in success rates because of inadequate teaching, learning and assessment.
- Senior leaders have been successful in establishing a new governing body. They have removed many of the problems which beset the previous board and have appointed both a new chair and clerk to the governing body. Procedures for new senior management appointments are now more rigorous, as are processes for approving major expenditure. Governors bring a good range of skills and experience to the college, as does the new clerk. They meet monthly and now receive accurate performance data to challenge managers about standards achieved by learners and the quality of teaching and learning. Governors are clear about the role of the college in supporting its local community and economy.
- Self-assessment is inadequate. It does not provide a rigorous analysis of the performance of the college. Staff carrying out lesson observations overestimate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, resulting in an unrealistic view of classroom practice which does not concur with the inadequate learners' outcomes. Self-assessment, overall and in subject areas, underestimates the significance of low success rates and does not identify the extent of weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment; it therefore does not provide an accurate basis for planning improvements.
- The use of management information requires improvement. Success rate data are now more reliable than at any time during the past year, following a period in which a number of factors contributed to an over-inflation of the performance of the college. However, senior managers are not sufficiently aware of the reasons for the performance of different groups of learners, or of the significance of national rates for success when evaluating the performance of particular subjects.
- The arrangements for the performance management of staff have improved over the past year, but require improvement. A substantial number of under-performing staff left the college in 2013/14, while others received focused support to improve their teaching. Tutors find review and appraisal procedures helpful in supporting them to improve. However, the over-grading of lesson observations does not enable managers to identify the extent of poor teaching and the numbers of tutors who require intensive support to improve their classroom practice.
- Senior leaders' implementation of study programmes for young people enrolled at the college is inadequate. Managers have been slow to establish appropriate arrangements to ensure learners study English and mathematics at the right level based on their prior attainment. Senior leaders do not have an action plan to implement their cross-college strategy for English and mathematics. The teaching of discrete English and mathematics is inadequate and too few learners achieve qualifications in these subjects. Opportunities for learners to gain work experience are very limited.
- Managers have carried out a useful, recent rationalisation of courses based on the needs of employers and learners, which has resulted in the discontinuation of some of the college's poorly performing provision. However, managers recognise the need for further work with employers, other education and training providers and Luton Borough Council to align the curriculum more closely with business and community needs. Staff who provide provision for businesses work well with employers in establishing subcontracted provision. Subcontractors' success rates are high, particularly for learners studying short courses to improve their

employment prospects. Relationships with the local enterprise partnership are developing well, and have resulted in a bid for funding to establish a science, technology, engineering and mathematics centre at the college, supported by key employers.

- The management of work-based learning is inadequate. Senior managers responsible for this area of the college's provision are candid about the reasons that have contributed to the very poor performance of apprenticeships in the past two years. They are realistic about what needs to improve and are very active in implementing actions to ensure apprentices achieve more successfully. The removal of a poorly performing subcontractor is helping work-based learning managers to start to resolve many of the key challenges they face in improving provision, such as the late introduction of functional skills qualifications towards the end of apprentices' training.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Staff organise a wide range of cross-college events and tutorials that promote equality and diversity well, drawing attention to specific cultural concerns such as female genital mutilation. Community-based pre-ESOL courses help to attract learners into education who might not otherwise attend the college. Young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good support. Staff work well with the borough to support looked after children and care leavers with their education. However, senior managers are not sufficiently conversant with the reasons for differences in achievements of different groups of learners, or what actions are necessary to rectify them. Learners' behaviour is frequently disrespectful.
- Arrangements to safeguard learners require improvement. The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Governors receive an annual report on safeguarding incidents and how managers have resolved them. They have nominated a link governor for safeguarding who is awaiting training for the role. Learners feel safe in lessons and when inside the college buildings. However, the college has multiple entry points and a significant minority of learners do not wear identity badges. Staff do not challenge them to ensure their badges are visible at all times and learners will often remove the badges after having been asked to put them on at the entrances to the college. Learners receive good advice on safeguarding through the tutorial programme, and managers took prompt action when a recent survey revealed a small minority of learners who were unaware of safeguarding arrangements. Although managers work well with the 'Prevent' team to train tutors to become more aware of radicalisation and extremism, too few learners have received training on the dangers of extreme views.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Barnfield College									
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	4			4		4			
Outcomes for learners	4			4		4			
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	4			4		4			
The effectiveness of leadership and management	4			4		4			

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and Social Care	3
Building and Construction	4
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	4
Visual Arts	3
Media and Communication	3
ESOL	4
Foundation mathematics	4

College details

Type of provider	General further education college							
Age range of learners	14+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	11,897							
Principal/CEO	Mrs Monica Box							
Date of previous inspection	April 2012							
Website address	www.barnfield.ac.uk							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	570	1,108	530	485	560	483	27	288
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	79	63	14	98	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	216							
Full-time	0							
Part-time	216							
Number of community learners	197							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action For Opportunity Ltd ▪ Aztak Solutions Ltd ▪ Edudo Ltd ▪ Nhanced Learning Ltd ▪ The Tess Group ▪ Working Links (Employment) Ltd. 							

Contextual information

Barnfield College is the largest provider of further education in the Luton area and is situated on two main campuses in the town. Luton is an extremely diverse town, both ethnically and socially. Almost one third of residents are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Areas with a vibrant business culture sit alongside parts of the town where people face significant personal and financial challenges in their everyday lives. The town's previously strong manufacturing base has declined significantly to be largely replaced by a wide range of technical and service industries. Almost 30% of employees in Luton work in public administration, health and education. The proportions of people of working age with qualifications at levels 1 to 4 are well below local, regional and national averages.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Richard Moore HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the Vice Principal, Curriculum and Planning as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the past three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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