

Bolton College

General further education college

Inspection dates		16-20 March 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- too few learners are successful in achieving their main learning goal
- the proportion of apprentices achieving their qualification in the planned time are inadequate
- not enough learners study GCSE English and mathematics to improve their skills and achieve higher grades
- verbal and written feedback to learners is not consistently good across all subjects; as a result, too many learners do not know what they need to do to improve the quality of their work
- quality assurance interventions have not been sufficiently robust to ensure that improvements take place quickly enough and reduce the impact that weak practice has on learners' experience
- the performance of tutors who do not perform at a sufficiently high standard in their teaching, learning and assessment is not improved quickly enough.

This provider has the following strengths:

- the good approach and attention given to developing learners' personal, social and employability skills including punctuality, appearance, respect and behaviour
- the development of learners' vocational skills across a wide choice of vocational areas to prepare them for the workplace and/or or further study
- the highly inclusive and respectful learning environment that allows learners the freedom to share valuable life experiences and celebrate cultural diversity in a safe way
- the college's approach to ensuring that learners feel and are safe while they study at the college
- the participation and contribution the college makes to meet the key local skills and employment priorities, such as the development of a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) centre and effective links with local employers and the local Jobcentre Plus.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportions of learners who achieve their main learning goal and their target qualifications by continuing to focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Ensure that all teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of individual learners, particularly the most able. Improve the quality of verbal and written feedback that learners receive so that they know what they need to do to improve their work. Monitor learners' progress closely and take action quickly to support those at risk of failing.
- Increase the number of learners who study GCSE qualifications in English and/or mathematics, and improve the quality of tutors' verbal and written feedback so that learners can improve their grade.
- Closely monitor the impact of the changes made to the management of the apprenticeship programmes to ensure that all apprentices experience at least a good quality programme and to improve significantly the proportion of apprentices who achieve the framework in the planned time.
- Review and analyse the impact of quality improvement actions the college takes in order to ensure that they have the desired effect so that outcomes for learners improve quickly and are at least good across all subject areas.
- Intervene quickly and decisively to improve the performance of teachers whose practice is below the required standard.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The college offers a range of courses that cover nearly all of the subject sector areas. The college provides programmes of study for adult learners both in the college and in the community at pre-entry, entry and levels 1, 2 and 3 and this represents 58% of the provision. Learners aged 16-18 on study programmes at pre-entry, entry and levels 1, 2 and 3 make up 24% of the provision. Apprenticeships at intermediate and advanced level are 12% of the college's provision. The remaining 6% of provision is for learners studying employability programmes. ▪ The proportion of learners who complete their courses and achieve their qualifications requires improvement; in recent years, they have remained stubbornly at or just above the national rate for 16-18-year-olds and below the national rate last year for adult learners. ▪ Although a high proportion of 16-18-year-old learners achieved certificates and awards at all levels last year, the success rate on diploma qualifications at all three levels was too low. The success rate for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) at level 1 for a small group of learners was poor. ▪ For adult learners on access to higher education courses, the success rate is good. A high proportion of learners are successful on GCSE courses except in English and mathematics. The success rates for adults on community learning courses are high and are good. However, too many adults on short courses at levels 1 and 2 do not achieve their qualifications. ▪ The success rates for both intermediate and advanced apprentices declined over the last three years and are inadequate. The college has introduced a significant number of changes to the apprenticeship provision to remedy the poor success rates. Although the provision is improving, and current apprentices are making better progress, too many have already left their programme. 	

- Success rates last year in engineering, construction and preparation for work were well below the national rate, and several other subject areas were just below. In these areas, too many learners leave before the end of the course and not enough of those who complete the course are successful.
- On advanced vocational courses, 16-18-year-olds do not succeed well enough relative to their starting points and they do not achieve the grades expected of them. This is especially marked in sports studies, information technology, public services and drama programmes. College data show an improvement in learners' grades and they are now making better progress.
- College managers analyse the performance of different groups of learners in detail, there are very few gaps in achievements and a range of effective strategies are in place to narrow the existing gaps further. African and Indian learners aged 16-18 and adult Bangladeshi learners succeed well compared to White British learners except in construction where they do not.
- The college places a strong emphasis on and are successful in developing the personal, social and employability skills for all learners, many of whom come to the college with very low starting points and from areas of Bolton with high levels of deprivation. Too few 16-18-year-old learners achieve grades A* to C in GCSE English and mathematics; adult learners perform better, and the proportion who achieve high grades in mathematics is high. Too few learners who achieve a grade D for their GCSE in either English or mathematics undertake further GCSE study in order to achieve a higher grade; many of these enrol on functional skills courses and a minority are at too low a level for the learners' ability.
- Functional skills success rates are good at levels 1 and 2. The college has developed strong links with Jobcentre Plus to provide courses that develop learners' employability skills. The college uses its community learning provision well to meet local employer and Jobcentre Plus requirements by delivering bespoke courses and programmes to meet their requirements. The extensive range of qualifications very effectively meet a wide range of personal, social and employability skills, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening, personal appearance, job application and interview skills.
- The wide range of provision, including extensive use of non-regulated programmes, provides a good choice of courses and progression opportunities for learners. The proportion of learners progressing to the next level of study is good. Management actions to improve the tracking of learners' destinations on leaving college are effective. Overall progression of college leavers into employment is too low however, the number who progress into employment or higher education from level 3 programmes is good.
- The college works closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and 'Team Bolton' in offering qualifications to learners that enable them to be better prepared to progress into employment that meets local needs. The college provides good training and support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to enhance their ability to live independently and gain employment.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Although outcomes for learners require improvement, most learners now benefit from good teaching, learning and assessment that challenge them to be as successful a learner as they can be, and to be ready to move on to higher levels of education or training, or to get ready for employment.
- Inspectors reviewed teaching, learning and assessment in six subject areas that represents a broad range of the courses that Bolton College offers to learners. During the inspection, inspectors also observed learning in other subject areas taught in the college, in community venues and at employers' premises.
- Learners grow in confidence and acquire important and relevant knowledge and technical skills through their interactions with well-qualified subject tutors and specialist support staff. The friendly and welcoming environment in which they work now motivates learners to do well. They

enjoy their time at college; they value and gain much from the expertise and knowledge that their tutors share with them. Through discussion and incisive questioning from tutors, learners in performing arts develop a deeper understanding of contemporary influences on movement, and so enhance their own performances.

- Recently appointed learning development mentors use review meetings effectively to agree targets for achievement with learners so that they make the progress they should. As a result, more learners stay on their courses and show good attitudes to learning. They develop strong personal and social skills, and demonstrate their willingness and ability to work with other learners, staff and visitors to the college, regardless of their background.
- In a small minority of sessions, tutors do not plan effectively to meet the needs of all learners, particularly the most able. In these lessons, learners wait too long after completing their work before the tutor moves on to the next stage of learning, and do not therefore make the progress they should.
- The advice and support received from advanced practitioners improves tutors' teaching practice for the benefit of their learners. A college-wide focus on taking a 'chance on change' has led to an improved approach to learning by tutors. In performing arts tutors and learners use on-line video to share, evaluate and enhance techniques; while in health and social care, tutors and learners discuss news-feeds to develop and apply better empathy skills to improve the experience of residents in care settings.
- Learners benefit from well-judged initial advice, assessments, interviews and 'taster sessions' in subject areas that, for most, ensure they enrol on study programmes or apprenticeships that are at the right level and meet their career or academic aspirations. Tutors and learners review course choices early at 'right course reviews' so that learners can change to a more appropriate one and settle into this quickly so fewer leave college. Tutors, mentors and assessors know their learners well, and use this knowledge effectively to monitor and evaluate their progress and to set targets for future development.
- Good information and advice as well as careers advice from highly qualified staff, guide learners well through topics, such as writing a curriculum vitae and looking for work, applying for student finance for university, writing personal statements and practising interview techniques. This and the open access to a drop-in centre and lunchtime job clubs, are effective in helping most learners find out about current opportunities and what they need to do to prepare for higher-level qualifications, training or employment.
- Opportunities to access a relevant work experience for the majority of learners are good. The college works well with a number of local employers, stakeholders and partners who provide a range of placement opportunities. These provide learners with a good opportunity to develop both their social and employability skills and become accustomed to the world of work.
- Feedback to learners is not consistently good. Tutors in most curriculum areas provide learners with detailed written feedback on end-of-unit assessments and explain what they have done well, and what needs to improve. This feedback often sets and records challenging targets for future work. Too often, feedback on classwork or smaller pieces of assessed work is cursory or non-existent. Consequently, a minority of learner files do not show sufficiently well how learning has developed over time. Tutors' feedback on how learners can improve their English and mathematics skills is too variable and in too many written assessments mistakes are not identified.
- College staff and learners write a weekly column in the local paper to share good practice, explore topics and set relevant and interesting challenges so that readers can identify the benefits of good English and mathematics skills in their daily lives. Every curriculum area provides learners with relevant word-lists so that they can use subject terminology correctly. In the preparation of vegetables in catering, for example, tutors expect learners at all levels to know, understand and use terms, such as julienne or tian. In a small minority of cases, tutors lack the expertise to integrate successfully English or mathematics skills into their teaching and let errors in their own writing slip through.

- Managers, tutors, support workers, service staff and learners show high levels of respect, sensitivity and tolerance. Learners feel highly valued as individuals and enjoy working together in a college that actively promotes integration and celebrates diversity. Because tutors and learners see this as 'normal', it means that they do not always go much beyond discussions in tutorials to enhance their understanding and application of these values in lessons.

Health and social care and early years and playwork

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care and early years are good because:

- although outcomes for learners were below national averages on health and social care and early years programmes in 2013/14, new management, improved monitoring systems, new tutoring staff and the learning development mentor posts have produced significant in-year improvements in attendance and retention
- learners receive very good support from their tutors and they now make good progress; learners are very clear about what they need to do and when, and are confident that they are on track to achieve their goals with good progression to higher education and/or employment
- learners value their varied work placements which meet individual interests and links practice with theory well; for example, learners explain transition models in relation to how they are preparing young children for school and health and social care learners link symptoms of dementia to service users at their placements
- good teaching enables learners to produce good quality work and learners make good progress in lessons and respond well to the high standards set by tutors; for example, tutors provide developmental feedback with good support for spelling, grammar and referencing particularly in early years assignments
- tutors provide good professional health development to their learners; for example, health and social care learners discuss whether service users should be allowed to choose to smoke
- behaviour is good and tutors create an inclusive, respectful environment in which learners feel safe; for example, adult health and social care learners are confident to share their own experience of discrimination
- learners feel safe and safeguard themselves at work, for example, early years learners know their responsibilities under equal opportunities legislation and health and social care learners recognise hazards and risks in the workplace
- attendance and punctuality are improving and are now good through the prompt actions of learning development mentors and the effective use of late slips; learners, tutors and managers have easy access to accurate individual attendance and punctuality data to monitor rates closely
- development of awareness of diversity is good; tutors develop learners' understanding; for example, in health and social care a consideration of prostate cancer included the gender implications for self-esteem and in early years, differences in parenting techniques were related to gender culture
- study programmes at all levels very effectively meet learners' needs and aspirations; each level of programme provides learners with a distinctly different experience that develops their knowledge and expertise well.

Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care and early years are not yet outstanding because:

- although retention for intermediate and advanced learners on health and social care is improving it remained below national rates for last year

- tutors do not sufficiently develop learners' mathematics skills in classes and attendance at both English and mathematics classes is lower than in their vocational programmes.

Building services and construction crafts

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in construction and the built environment require improvement because:

- too many learners do not pass their qualification and too many adult learners leave before completing their course and the success rate for the small number of apprentices is just in line with the national rate
- too few learners on all levels of programmes access a good quality, substantive work placement or experience; a minority of learners benefit from a relationship with a 'Bolton at home' scheme but the majority do not have an opportunity to develop realistic work skills
- tutors' written feedback to learners on the quality of their work does not consistently identify spelling and grammatical errors or give clear advice on how work can be improved
- a minority of learners are not sufficiently aware of the progress they are making towards achieving their main vocational qualification; some are unaware of how much work they have left to do or when they are due to finish their course
- some aspects of advice and guidance to a small number of learners needs improvement; for example, some learners want to progress to further learning with the college but are unaware of the next steps they need to take or what the requirements would be
- minority ethnic learners do not achieve as well as White British learners and the strategies to reduce the achievement gap are ineffective.

In construction and the built environment, the provider has the following strengths:

- support for learners is good with additional support from their learning development mentor as necessary; learners feel safe and demonstrate safe working practices in the workshops
- learners are set challenging practical work with targets to complete these tasks in the time that is allocated to the job in the workplace
- the majority of classroom and workshop sessions are now well-planned resulting in more learners who are engaged, motivated and able to complete individualised tasks which are appropriate for their level of ability; some learners are encouraged to extend their learning by completing more advanced tasks, such as fitting plasterboard, taping and skimming
- regular group tutorials with learning development mentors enable all learners to develop their knowledge of key and current topics such as equality and diversity, politics, gambling awareness, drug awareness, cyber-bullying and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender issues

**Hairdressing and beauty therapy
Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+
Apprenticeships**

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in hairdressing and beauty therapy are good because:

- the majority of learners complete and achieve their main qualification and all learners successfully achieve in a few courses, such as the diploma in hairdressing and the diploma in hair and media makeup tutors have high expectations of learners and set high standards especially in practical skill development; for example, they enable learners to attain high standards of customer service and the ability to engage fully with clients
- planning of lessons is particularly effective in making full use of the high quality resources available; good use is made of e-learning resources to complement lessons and, for example, the use of video to show how to complete a short graduated hair cut
- short-term target-setting is good and supports learners to make individual progress in their qualifications
- feedback on learners' work is good and supports improvement in spelling and grammar as well as setting further targets; tutors make good use of a system of recognition and reward for high quality work that includes 'scissor' badges, certificates and postcards to parents
- tutors include English and mathematics activities well in their lessons, for example, cutting angles and treatment time calculations; consequently learners develop these skills well and they are relevant to their use in the industry
- induction, advice and guidance and support for learners are good and ensure that learners take every opportunity to explore and understand career pathways and further learning programmes; examples include a level 2barbering learner who was able to progress to an apprenticeship because of the guidance from a tutor who had good professional links with the employer
- tutors embed health and safety measures well, especially in practical activities, and reinforce safe procedures to learners; examples include using heated equipment, such as driers and tongs, and handling chemicals
- tutors contextualise and incorporate equality and diversity into their vocational training; this includes using scenarios, discussions and questions to prepare learners fully for the wide range of client types and needs that they will meet in the industry.

Teaching, learning and assessment in hair and beauty are not yet outstanding because:

- on a few courses in nail technology, beauty therapy and hair techniques where the number of learners is low, success rates are low
- in a minority of lessons, the strategies used by tutors do not fully engage all learners; some learners make slow progress on mathematics and English extension tasks because the tutor does not encourage or explain the importance sufficiently well
- in a small number of cases, learners are unclear about their progress and what assessments and units still remain to be completed.

English and modern foreign languages
Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+
Community learning

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in English and modern foreign languages are good because:

- the achievement rates on all courses are high and the development of the learners language and literacy skills is good; a large majority of foreign language and sign language learners are often able to use their acquired language skills in the workplace
- tutors are skilled; most foreign language tutors are native speakers and knowledgeable in language development and they consistently use the target language in sessions to maximise language learning for their learners
- much learning is good and tutors have high expectations of their learners; they plan very effectively to develop learners' reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematic skills where practically possible
- learners enjoy their learning; for example, learners participated in a lively group discussion on the topic of analysing telephone texts in an English GCSE lesson; learners with learning difficulties and hearing impairments thoroughly enjoyed miming words and signing numbers
- tutors make good use of a variety of resources and technology to make learning fun; for example, using pictorial images in a Spanish lesson that resulted in a lively discussion on food and in another lesson the learners extended their knowledge of German grammar in the use of suffixes
- access to and use of computers in GCSE English is good and learners make good use of them to research and prepare presentations; for example, on the topic of 'Multi Modal Talk' and exploring the history of social media sites
- learners benefit from good verbal feedback in language sessions on the use of correct vocabulary and pronunciation of words; most GCSE and language tutors give clear and helpful written feedback to learners about what they need to do to improve further
- support, advice and guidance for learners are good and effective use is made of learning support assistants and 'drop-in' sessions to assist GCSE English learners who need extra support to help them complete their course
- there is good promotion of inclusion and celebration of diversity and learners have mutual respect for others; for example, the modern foreign language learners learn about the cultures of the countries of the target language and as part of their enrichment activities sign language learners gain knowledge about the deaf community and their culture.

Teaching, learning and assessment in English and modern foreign languages are not yet outstanding because:

- too few learners achieve grade C or above in their GCSE English course
- the resources on the college's virtual learning environment, to support learners and develop their independent learning skills are limited.

Foundation English
Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+
Community learning

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English are good because:

- a high proportion of learners succeed and complete their qualification as demonstrated in the data for last year; they produce work that is of a good standard or better; a majority of learners progress to higher level English courses or employment
- most learners make good progress during lessons; they develop a wide range of useful skills, such as improved confidence of parents to help their children with homework and the ability to write letters for job applications
- most tutors have high expectations of learners and use these well to encourage learners to reach their potential; for example, learners use complex presentational features effectively in written text
- tutors make good use of additional learning support staff in lessons; they plan and manage their activities well so that learners who need extra help make good progress
- planning for learning is good; most tutors draw effectively on the outcomes of diagnostic assessment to develop learning programmes that match the individual needs of learners well
- tutors use a range of interesting activities successfully to challenge learners; they enable learners to develop a wide range of useful English skills, such as using accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work and distinguishing between fact and opinion in speech
- tutors use information technology well to enhance learning; in a lesson on frequently occurring homophones, such as residents and residence, the tutor used the smartboard successfully to enable learners to learn their spellings and when to use them
- initial assessment arrangements are good; tutors identify accurately the levels at which learners are currently working and place them on an appropriate course
- learners benefit from good information, advice and guidance; staff direct learners to courses that meet their learning needs and inform them well about the content and assessment requirements.

Foundation English is not yet outstanding because:

- attendance is too low in a few lessons for 16-18-year-olds; this impedes the progress of a small minority of learners
- most tutors do not make sufficient use of the virtual learning environment to promote independent learning; learners do not sufficiently develop their independent learning skills which means that they are not able to extend their learning outside of lessons.

Independent living and leisure skills
Learning programmes for 16-18
Learning programmes for 19+
Community learning

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in independent living and leisure skills are good because:

- the retention, achievement and success rates for the vast majority of learners are good and learners make good progress in developing their personal, social and employability skills on their study programmes; many learners receive strong support to enable them to undertake a work placement successfully to prepare for their future life

- tutors respond well to learners' needs and work together effectively to motivate and support learners to achieve their learning goals; learners, with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who express an interest in developing their independent living skills are able to join a catering course to develop their confidence and technical skills
- through well-planned sessions, learners understand the consequences of different types of behaviour; in a lesson on employability skills learners, through the medium of celebrities, articulated the impact of criminal behaviour on life chances and future employability; in a lesson on social networking learners analysed the benefits and drawbacks of their use of social media and what impact this can have on their online reputation
- teaching and learning support the development of English and mathematics; in a beauty and holistic therapy lesson learners cost the price of various nail art designs; in a motor vehicle lesson learners identify all the different types of communication skills that they will need to provide good customer service when they are working in the industry; deaf learners develop their enterprise vocabulary through a flash word activity on the interactive whiteboard, where they read and write words at speed
- a well-thought-out progression route enables learners with complex learning difficulties and disabilities to follow a coherent pathway; learners progress from programmes that focus on independence through communication to preparing for work through employability; when learners can no longer progress in college, job coaches help them to gain confidence and independence through wider work placements
- learners demonstrate their understanding of and commitment to equality and diversity through the good relations that exist in classes; in a tutorial learners were very respectful and aware of the extra time that some of their peers needed to communicate and all learners were able to contribute successfully.

Teaching, learning and assessment in independent living and leisure skills are not yet outstanding because:

- a minority of learners are unclear about their educational targets; learners know about their behavioural targets and how to meet these but a few learners do not know what their subject targets are and so do not make quick progress
- reviews of individual support do not encourage learners to consider how they can become more independent; tutors do not always challenge learners to develop their autonomy through a gradual tapering of support
- in a small minority of cases, study programmes do not sufficiently meet the very individual needs of learners; this means that a small number of learners do not achieve their learning goals.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior managers and governors have a clear vision to provide high quality education and training to meet the local training needs of learners and employers in Bolton. They work successfully with the LEP and the local authority to ensure that provision is highly responsive to local and regional priorities. However, since the previous inspection, the proportion of learners who successfully complete their qualification has remained stubbornly static, the management of subcontracted provision has been weak and managers have not been sufficiently effective in ensuring that all learners receive the same high quality learning experience in every curriculum area.
- Governors have a wide range of relevant skills which they use well to support the college's development. Regular reports on the college's performance enable them to challenge senior managers to account for underperformance. However, information provided on the management of the apprenticeship and subcontracted provision was too positive and limited governors' ability to hold senior managers to account.

- Good partnership working and a strong commitment to the local community has resulted in a dynamic and flexible curriculum that provides learners with good opportunities to progress to further study, apprenticeships and employment. Managers and staff work well with local schools to ensure the smooth entry into college of learners at risk of not participating. Managers contribute effectively to the 'virtual college' established in Bolton to nurture and help learners in the care of the local authority to access successfully further education.
- Managers working closely with Bolton council's employment and skills board, use their analysis of local demographic data very well to indicate where skills shortages exist and to plan provision accordingly. For example, the STEM centre was recently opened in response to the lack of vocational STEM provision and pathways into higher education and high level technical qualifications. Managers' representation on local employment and enterprise groups ensures that they respond swiftly to changes in local needs.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of study programmes and managers make very good use of their many links with employers to provide external work placements for the majority of learners. The design of vocational programmes includes an appropriate focus on improving English and mathematics skills. However, in too many subjects, tutors do not ensure that learners with a GCSE grade D successfully improve their qualification to a GCSE A* to C grade.
- The management of subcontractors until recently has been weak. Leaders and managers have failed to monitor closely the performance of subcontractors or ensured that courses and apprenticeship programmes are of high quality and meet learners' needs well. The college has now cancelled nearly all subcontracting arrangements and has brought the vast majority of the provision in-house.
- Governors and managers have a broadly accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, more of which is now good. Managers identify the key strengths and areas for improvement when observing teaching and implement a sharply focused professional development and mentoring schedule that tutors value. However, improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have not yet had sufficient impact in a small number of subjects, such as construction and business administration.
- Managers correctly identify many of the key areas for improvement through robust self-assessment, which leads to the quality improvement plan; managers and governors monitor rigorously the implementation of this plan. However, the plan is not sufficiently rigorous and the interventions have not yet led to noticeable improvements in curriculum management or outcomes for learners.
- Performance management is very effective in identifying what tutors need to improve in the quality of their teaching, learning and assessment practice. Managers support tutors well when they are not operating at the high levels that they expect. However, there remain a small number of tutors who have not improved their practice quickly enough which impacts negatively on learners' experiences and achievements.
- The college is a welcoming place in which to study and work. Leaders have embedded equality of opportunity extremely well throughout the college community; staff and learners reflect well the diverse cultural heritage of the local community.
- The safeguarding arrangements for learners are good; learners feel and are very safe. The well-trained and highly effective learner support team is expert in identifying and supporting the most vulnerable learners. High numbers of learners confidently self-disclose and the subsequent good support provided for them by tutors enables them to remain in learning and achieve. Systems and processes to recruit staff are rigorous and follow guidelines to ensure that managers take all the necessary precautions regarding safe recruitment practice.
- Through effective partnerships with external organisations, such as the police, staff and managers have developed a thorough awareness of and responded well to issues of national concern, such as the potential risk to learners of radicalisation, and ensure good protection for vulnerable learners.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Bolton 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	3	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	3	4	N/A	2
Outcomes for learners	3	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	3	4	N/A	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	2	3	N/A	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	3	3	N/A	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Early years and playwork	2
Building services	3
Construction crafts	3
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
English	2
Modern foreign languages	2
Foundation English	2
Independent living and leisure skills	2

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college							
Age range of learners	14+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	7482							
Principal/CEO	Ms Marie Gilluley							
Date of previous inspection	May 2010							
Website address	www.boltoncollege.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+
	550	2112	690	963	625	538	0	10
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	202	276	74	421	2	11		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	6		9		15			
Number of learners aged 14-16	91							
Full-time	1							
Part-time	90							
Number of community learners	948							
Number of employability learners	459							
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"> ■ Birtenshaw College ■ Bolton Wanderers FC ■ Eden College ■ Investing In Development ■ National Sales Academy ■ The TESS Group ■ Varis ■ Watertrain Capital ■ Watertrain Ltd ■ Watertrain Midland ■ Weston Spencer ■ WGGS 							

Additional socio-economic information

Bolton is a large diverse borough with a population of 280,100 and 21% of the population consider themselves part of one of the non-White ethnic minorities with those from an Indian background constituting the largest minority group. Bolton includes some of the most affluent areas in the region and some of the poorest. Almost 43% of the borough's population lives in neighbourhoods that are among the 25% most deprived in England and Wales. The unemployment rate for Bolton, at 9.3% is higher than the rate for the North West (7.9%) and England as a whole (6.8%).

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Tim Gardner HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Quality as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last 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 of the provision at the college. 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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