

Blackburn College

General further education college

Inspection dates

14–17 March 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement	Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Outstanding	

Summary of key findings

This is a college that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not brought about sufficiently consistent improvement in students' achievements and progress.
- Leaders and managers do not use management information well enough to set and monitor the impact of actions taken to improve the quality of provision.
- Too few students on study programmes and adult learning programmes achieve the grades and develop the skills to their full potential.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not of a consistently high standard; teachers do not provide sufficiently challenging work for students on study programmes and adult learning programmes.
- Students do not make sufficient progress in developing their English and mathematics skills; too few achieve their qualifications or improve their GCSE grade.
- Students' attendance and punctuality are too low on study programmes and adult learning programmes, which limits their progress.
- Leaders, managers and staff do not sufficiently evaluate how students benefit from completing work experience or workplace training and how they develop their work skills.
- Students and apprentices do not have sufficient knowledge on how the dangers of radicalisation and extremism can impact on their everyday lives.

The college has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have nurtured effective relationships with a large number of employers, partners and community groups to extend and enhance the opportunities for students and apprentices to develop their skills and progress into employment to meet local and regional skills priorities.
- Students with high needs make good progress, and most achieve their personal targets and qualifications.
- Apprentices make good progress towards achieving their qualifications within the planned timescales. Apprentices develop high-level technical skills in high-quality workplaces with good industry resources.
- Leaders and staff promote a harmonious and inclusive culture, which embraces the values of the college. Students are respectful of each other and staff, and standards of behaviour are high.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Blackburn College is a large, general further education college situated in the centre of Blackburn. The college offers further education courses in 14 sector subject areas, and delivers apprenticeships, employer training and higher education programmes. The college has subcontracted provision with one provider.
- Blackburn College is at the heart of the multiracial community of Blackburn with Darwen and aims to provide social cohesion in an area of high deprivation. The college works with a range of local partnerships to contribute to the wider prosperity and regeneration of East Lancashire. The majority of students are from the most economically deprived local areas, around a third are of minority ethnic heritage and almost two thirds of students enrol at the college without having achieved five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. Blackburn with Darwen is a 'Prevent' priority area and 14% of the local population have no qualifications.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all teachers plan and use activities that use students' starting points and prior learning that challenge them so that they achieve their potential
 - all teachers plan and use effective assessment practices so that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work
 - all teachers closely monitor the progress of students to ensure that they provide effective support to those at risk of falling behind, set high expectations of what students can achieve and support students to make good or better progress
 - teachers improve the development of students' mathematics skills in lessons.
- Rapidly improve students' attendance and punctuality on study programmes and adult learning programmes.
- Improve the development of students' English and mathematics skills so that a greater proportion achieve their qualifications or improve their GCSE grade.
- Improve students and apprentices understanding of how the dangers of radicalisation and extremism can impact on their everyday lives.
- Strengthen arrangements for the analysis of management information about the college's performance, including data on attendance, punctuality, retention, achievement, high grades and students' in-year progress, to implement challenging actions for improvement and ensure that the quality of provision is consistently high across all subject areas.
- Ensure that leaders and managers rapidly improve the rigour of self-assessment so that it is accurate, priorities for improvement are clear and the progress in implementing strategies to improve is closely monitored and evaluated.
- Ensure that leaders, managers and staff capture all students' and apprentices' prior employment skills and evaluate the progress they make in developing the skills they need for their chosen careers or personal goals.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers do not have a sufficient oversight of the progress that students and apprentices make on their courses. The new senior management team have recently implemented systems to monitor progress in learning but it is not yet used consistently by all staff to provide managers with the information they need to take rapid action. Too few teachers and assessors use information about students' and apprentices' progress well enough to identify and support those students and apprentices who are making slow progress.
- Leaders and managers have failed to evaluate accurately the quality of the provision through the annual self-assessment process. Managers are overly positive about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; insufficient attention is given to how the quality of course delivery is having an impact on students' progress.
- Improvement planning requires further development. Too many objectives detailed in course action plans do not sufficiently identify what needs to be completed, provide short-term targets or completion dates. Too many of the subjects that had poor student achievements in 2015/16 have not improved in the current year. Consequently, too many current students are not achieving the high grades of which they are capable.
- Targets set in staff appraisal documents are clear and unambiguous. However, appraisal documents do not detail the outcomes from the observations of teaching and learning, including the actions and support required for the member of staff to improve their practice. Consequently, leaders and managers are unable to monitor the impact of their actions on improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the academic year.
- Staff benefit from a wide range of generic professional development activities to enhance and improve their teaching practice. However, managers do not prioritise sufficiently the specific support that teachers, trainers and assessors need to improve their identified areas of improvement. Consequently, teachers, trainers and assessors do not improve their practice quickly enough.
- Leaders and managers have successfully implemented a range of appropriate policies and procedures to promote equality and celebrate diversity at the college. Students receive information throughout the year on subjects such as forced marriage, respect in the community, tackling homophobic bullying and improving non-Muslim students' understanding of Ramadan. Consequently, students have a high level of respect for teachers and their peers, which promotes an inclusive and harmonious educational environment.
- Leaders manage the performance of the one subcontractor of apprenticeships particularly well. Leaders conduct regular reviews of performance, aligned with systematic quality monitoring visits to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is of a high standard and contractual requirements are met.
- Through effective engagement with employers, training providers and representatives of the local enterprise partnership, leaders have restructured the curriculum to meet the skills priorities of the communities it serves. Consequently, around three-quarters of the

provision align to the skills priorities of the Lancashire local enterprise partnership, which makes a positive contribution to the local community. For example, leaders at the college have developed very effective working relationships with a local provider of dementia care services to design a curriculum and work experience opportunities for students to develop their technical skills.

- Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the college, which they articulate clearly in a range of strategic documents to staff, partners and the governing body. Through these strategies, leaders set clear and specific priorities for the college to improve, enhance existing partnerships and nurture new ones to provide extensive employment and higher education opportunities for the residents of East Lancashire. However, this is yet to have an impact on students' successes and achievements.

The governance of the provider

- Leaders and managers have recently strengthened the governance arrangements at the college. The recently formed governing body is highly committed to the college and the surrounding area of Blackburn with Darwen. It has broad representation and extensive experience from education, academia, industry and the community. Governors have a clear strategy for the college and communicate the important role that it plays in the community. They support senior managers in achieving corporate, educational and social mobility objectives.
- Governors hold the senior management team to account on the broad aspects of the college, for example finance, staffing, resources and social and regional skills developments. However, governors do not request or receive sufficiently detailed information on the progress that students are making on their courses. Students' and apprentices' progress towards achieving their target grades still remains an area for improvement and is not challenged.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place at the college; staff use them well to protect students who are at risk of harm. The single central record is accurate and in place. The designated safeguarding lead person completes the appropriate level of training and regular updating. All staff receive regular training on safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty.
- Managers have nurtured effective links with external agencies to protect students and apprentices from a range of issues, including substance misuse, mental health, child sexual exploitation and forced marriage.
- Managers have ensured that there are appropriate transitional arrangements in place for children looked after and those with recent experience of local authority care. The welfare and support team works very closely with local authorities to ensure that students and apprentices have appropriate support when they enter the college, regardless of their previous social or educational background. Staff effectively support students with high needs and students disaffected by education in the past. Students quickly settle into college life.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies significantly across subject areas and provision types. Planning for learning on study programmes and adult learning programmes does not take into account the needs of all students, particularly the most able and, as a result, students on study programmes do not make sufficient progress to achieve their qualifications. Teachers focus too much on middle-ability students in most lessons and too few students make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers do not set challenging enough targets, and as a result, approximately half of the students on study programmes fail to meet their target grades.
- In study programmes, too many students do not receive sufficient challenge to extend their learning. In particular, the most able students finish their work then wait patiently for others to finish and do not achieve their potential. Assessors work well with employers to plan good learning and regular assessment opportunities for apprentices in the workplace so that they develop a range of new skills, often beyond those required for their job role.
- The majority of students do not receive detailed feedback following assessment that supports them to improve their work. Teachers do not use effective questioning to reinforce students' knowledge and understanding or develop high-level skills for adult students such as analysis or evaluation.
- The tracking, monitoring and recording of students' progress vary considerably across subject areas and types of provision. The college's 2015/16 self-assessment report identifies the college's own electronic tracking and monitoring system as an area for improvement. Teachers do not use the system sufficiently well and, as a result, too many teachers, students and managers do not have a clear understanding of students' progress.
- Students on study programmes benefit from good assessment of their starting points for English and mathematics skills. Teachers accurately use the results to place students on the appropriate level of study. Teachers do not set increasingly difficult tasks to challenge students to develop their mathematics skills in lessons.
- Apprentices undertake well-planned off- and on- the- job training. Apprentices speak confidently about how they apply the knowledge and skills gained through the effective teaching, learning and assessment they receive at work, in college and through their experienced assessors. Apprentices produce high standards of practical, technical and written work relevant to industry standards.
- Learning environments are generally of a good standard and replicate industry, for example the well-designed, well-equipped sports centre, the adult enterprise building in the town centre and the Regional Automotive Technology Hub, which teachers and assessors use well to develop students' technical skills.
- Staff are well qualified and provide positive role models on most courses. As a result, students practise up-to-date skills. Most teachers and assessors have good subject knowledge and use industry skills and experience well to develop students' technical skills through practical activities in workshops and in vocational areas such as hospitality and catering. Teachers develop students' technical language well in the majority of lessons, which prepares students and apprentices well for the workplace.
- The large majority of students and apprentices demonstrate an awareness of life in

modern Britain. In a minority of lessons, students comment on the college's values and discuss social issues in relation to living in a modern democratic society. For example, students in public services lessons use democracy as a theme for discussion and business administration students discuss the importance of cyber safety.

- Support for students and apprentices is good. Students with additional learning needs benefit from good and timely support, which helps to develop their technical skills and supports their learning well. The effective support helps students and apprentices to develop high levels of confidence and skills such as communication and teamwork.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Students' attendance is too low on study programmes and adult learning programmes and this limits their progress. Attendance has improved slightly compared to the same point in 2015/16, but remains low, particularly in English and mathematics classes, personal reviews and tutorial lessons.
- Vocational teachers and trainers do not plan consistently good learning and assessment activities that enable students to improve their mathematics skills quickly enough or reinforce the skills they need to return to work.
- The number of students on study programmes who have completed meaningful work experience is not yet high enough. The planning for, and evaluation of, work experience is not of a consistently high standard. The minority of students who have completed external work experience develop their technical skills well and use the experience to make better decisions about their future. Students grow in confidence from employers' positive feedback relating to the work skills developed and their behaviour in the workplace.
- Standards of behaviour are high. Students show respect for the ideas and views of others. They demonstrate mutual respect for, and have good relationships with, peers and staff. Students effectively demonstrate college values.
- Students with high needs make good progress towards achieving their qualifications and the development of their personal and social skills, and develop greater independent living skills.
- Students improve their written English skills. Teachers support students well to develop their skills to a higher level. Most teachers consistently identify students' incorrect spelling, grammar and punctuation. Teachers provide good reinforcement and development of the advanced skills that learners need for higher levels of study and job roles. Apprentices make good progress in developing the writing skills that they need for the workplace.
- Students and apprentices develop good technical skills, knowledge and language required for their chosen career. Many students develop high standards of practical industry skills, such as producing corporate media advertisements in business studies lessons, supporting teaching and learning, and early years apprentices study for additional accounting and first aid courses to support their employers' small business operations.
- Students and apprentices who regularly attend their lessons make good progress in developing the personal and social skills they need for work. Apprentices grow in

confidence and make good contributions to their employer's business.

- Students demonstrate effective communication skills and improve their confidence, team-building and problem-solving skills through a wide range of enrichment activities. College managers work effectively with employers to increase the number of work-related activities that students are involved in, enabling students to develop a better understanding of the expectations of employers.
- Staff provide good impartial careers advice at the start of and during students' programmes, which helps most students to make the right choice for them and their next steps in education, employment or apprenticeships. The large majority of students progress to university, further education or employment within the region.
- Specialist careers advice is highly effective. Teachers and support staff use extensive contacts with local employers and careers services well. Students access a range of visiting speakers from industry and higher education, which helps them to understand the skills required by industry or universities. Students participate in academic scholarships linked to universities and vocational scholarships linked to higher apprenticeships in large companies, which are effective in helping students explore and apply for potential careers.
- Students are aware of their rights and responsibilities but do not always demonstrate a depth of understanding of living life in modern Britain. Leaders and managers have invested significantly in producing a range of high-quality publications to raise students' awareness. A small number of teachers do not use the resources sufficiently well to involve students in meaningful discussions about everyday issues, the problems faced by individuals and groups in society or the impact on students' lives.
- Students feel safe, work safely and are safe. They know how to report any concerns they have about their safety. Students are aware of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism but do not talk confidently about the impact it has on their lives or the safety of others.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and managers have implemented a number of improvement initiatives since the beginning of 2015/16; however, these have not brought about sufficiently consistent improvement in students' achievements or in their progress. The majority of students do not make the progress expected of them based on their attainment when they start their course. Student achievement is not consistently good across a range of levels and subject areas.
- The proportion of 16- to 19-year-old and adult students who achieve their qualifications is broadly at the national rates despite the recent decline in many subject areas and at all levels.
- The number of apprentices who achieve their qualification within their planned timescale has declined over the past three years, but remains above the rate of similar providers.
- Too many students on 16 to 19 study programmes do not make sufficient progress in developing their English and mathematics skills and too few improve their GCSE grade from that achieved at school. Adult students develop their English skills well and many improve their GCSE grade; a higher proportion achieve grades A* to C than seen in similar colleges. However, too few adult students develop their mathematics skills and achieve

grades A* to C in their GCSE. Achievement rates for students and apprentices taking English and mathematics functional skills is improving but requires further improvement.

- Students on vocational and academic programmes do not make the progress expected of them based on their prior attainment, a position that has declined over two years. Not enough students achieve the high grades or develop the advanced skills that they are capable of in a range of key subjects, such as mathematics, English language, health and social care, engineering, art and design, and business management.
- The large majority of students on study programmes who left the college in 2015/16 progressed to a higher level of learning or full-time employment. An increasing number of students secure places at prestigious universities as a result of successfully completing the academic scholarship programme. The majority of students with high needs progress successfully into independent living, supported employment or volunteering.
- Apprentices make good progress in achieving their apprenticeship within the planned timescales. After a decline in achievement rates, managers have successfully intervened to ensure that performance is now good across most apprenticeship frameworks.
- The number of students remaining in learning in 2016/17 is high.
- In 2015/16, white males aged 16 to 19, adult females and learners with learning difficulties performed less well than their peers. There are no performance gaps between different groups of current students.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Around two thirds of the college's provision is the delivery of study programmes to around 2,800 full-time students aged 16 to 19. The majority of students follow vocational programmes, for example health and social care, creative arts, business, engineering, construction, hair and beauty and hospitality and catering. Approximately 239 students follow A-level programmes.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment on study programmes varies significantly between subjects and levels and, as a result, the majority of vocational students do not make the progress of which they are capable. For example, in too many subjects, teachers do not use their knowledge of students' starting points to plan stimulating lessons that challenge students to make rapid progress. Students complete the same work regardless of ability. Approximately half of students are making slow progress and do not reach their target grade.
- The quality of teachers' recording of student progress varies too much across subject areas. Targets are not sufficiently challenging and lack detail and clarity about what students need to do to achieve to the highest standards that they are capable of. Students are not making the expected progress from their starting points on the large majority of vocational study programmes at level 1, level 2 and level 3.
- The tracking of A-level students' progress has recently improved. Since September 2016, A-level students' complete regular assessments and the vast majority of teachers provide clear developmental feedback, which helps these students to understand the actions required to improve the quality of their work. The vast majority of current A-level students

are motivated and through additional improvement work they are achieving a higher grade in their assessments.

- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not use questions and activities sufficiently well to check learning reliably. Teachers do not always know the progress that individual students make in lessons. As a result, teachers do not challenge the most able students to achieve their full potential or support the less able students to understand the lesson topic and help them make progress.
- Managers' plans are not consistently improving students' mathematics skills. The new English and mathematics initiative is clear; however, it is not yet resulting in the effective development of mathematics in vocational lessons. For example, in hospitality and catering lessons, students discuss the scaling of ingredients for larger customer numbers but do not practise the calculations. Consequently, students do not always understand the relevance of, or make good progress towards, developing the mathematics skills they need for work.
- Students feel safe. The large majority of students' behaviour reflects the college's values and demonstrates a high level of respect for others. Students value support from staff and speak confidently and with understanding about keeping themselves safe online. They are aware of the broad dangers of radicalisation and extremism but the large majority of students are less confident when asked to explore issues more fully.
- Students develop good practical skills and use relevant technical terms well to prepare them for the workplace. For example, in textile lessons, students demonstrate advanced design surface techniques and sophisticated self-reflection for their final project. Students studying on level 1 catering programmes produce a wide range of popular pastries and light meals that they sell in the college's bakery. However, too many students on study programmes have yet to complete meaningful work experience.

Adult learning programmes

Requires improvement

- The number of adult students attending college is 1,572, studying on a range of programmes from entry level to level 4. Adult students follow programmes across 13 subject areas, with the largest areas including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English and mathematics.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations for all students. Most students work on the same tasks at the same pace of learning, regardless of ability or prior learning. Teachers do not challenge the most able students to complete advanced work or provide sufficient checks on the understanding and progress of less-able students in order to provide support before moving on. The majority of students do not reach their full potential from their initial starting points.
- Teachers, in the large majority of lessons, do not accurately check the progress of students. Questioning techniques do not extend students' knowledge or develop high-level skills such as analysis or evaluation. Teachers do not give students time to demonstrate what they have learned or develop their responses and, as a result, work is too easy for a minority of students and lesson discussions too often move on before a minority of students have understood the key points.
- Teachers do not consistently provide regular or accurate developmental feedback on

students' assessed work. In too many lessons, students' files have too much work that remains unassessed; students' work lacks constructive feedback or academic guidance from teachers on how to improve. As a result, students repeat errors and do not make good progress in developing the skills which they need to return to employment or for their future careers.

- Teachers do not use students' starting points well enough to plan individualised learning or set appropriate targets to monitor progress. Target-setting and progress-monitoring is not sufficiently detailed across adult programmes and not all students, teachers and managers are clear about the progress made by individual students.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers plan activities and learning well and ensure that individual students make good progress towards their targets. For example, in carpentry lessons, students are progressing well with tasks of increasing difficulty. Students with higher-level skills assemble and fit French doors, and display very good crafts skills.
- In most vocational and GCSE English lessons, students make good progress in developing their English and oracy skills through reading, writing and discussion activities. For example, in access to mental health lessons, students are quick to analyse text and identify media bias in reporting crime to suit the readership preferences. In contrast, teachers do not routinely develop students' mathematics skills and, as a result, students make slow progress, particularly in GCSE mathematics.
- Teachers promote health and safety in practical lessons well and, as a result, students work safely and keep themselves and others safe.
- The majority of students are developing effective personal, social and work-related skills to prepare them for their intended work or achieve their personal goals. Leaders and managers have successfully implemented opportunities for adult learners to develop their own small business enterprise ideas using high-level industry design equipment. Students who have been out of work and lack confidence to return to employment benefit from effective return-to-work support and coaching.
- In a minority of lessons teachers make useful links to employment and use their professional and industry experience well to support students' development and progress. For example, in barbering lessons students discuss how to increase product sales and the opportunities that staff often miss to offer hair colouring services to their male clients. Students in trade union lessons explore the importance of detailed planning for meetings to develop successful negotiations with employers and achieve a fair and successful outcome.
- Students display positive behaviour and attitudes to their learning in most lessons. Students are eager to learn and demonstrate a well-established culture of respect and tolerance.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the courses offered to adult students are linked to developing the vocational and employment skills required to meet the job opportunities in the region. Managers work well with Jobcentre Plus, employers, the local council and community stakeholder partners to provide education that gives students good opportunities to develop and progress.

Apprenticeships

Good

- The college has 965 apprentices on apprenticeship programmes, with almost equal numbers on intermediate and advanced levels, and a small cohort of higher apprenticeships. Around two thirds of apprentices are over 19 years old. Most apprentices follow engineering, business and administration, health care, early years and hairdressing programmes.
- Despite a decline over the past three years, the proportion of apprenticeships who complete their apprenticeships in the planned timeframe remains above that of similar providers.
- Managers and staff work well with employers to design and plan apprentices' programmes in line with national, regional and local priorities. Apprentices contribute well to their employers' businesses. Employers value the contribution that apprentices make and, as a result, offer sustained employment, including roles with additional responsibility. For example, a local hotel develops the skills of advanced apprentices by assigning them mentor roles to new apprentices.
- Apprentices develop a range of new skills that they are able to use in the workplace, often beyond the remit of their job role. For example, brickwork apprentices demonstrate high-level skills in plastering when building a wall.
- Assessors work well with employers to plan good learning and assessment in the workplace. Apprentices benefit from regular and flexible assessment that enables them to develop technical skills and make good progress. Assessors provide constructive feedback on their performance and areas for improvement. Early years apprentices are encouraged to reflect on their practice and complete additional research for assessment topics to deepen their knowledge. As a result, the majority of apprentices make good progress towards their apprenticeship framework.
- Apprentices develop their mathematics skills well in relation to their vocational studies. They use these skills to carry out daily tasks such as calculating the quantity of materials directly from drawings in construction, and using the correct ratios and measures when allocating and dispensing medication in health and social care.
- Apprentices benefit from learning in prestigious, good-quality, modern and well-equipped workplaces. Apprentices enhance their skills and demonstrate up-to-date industry practice and technical skills. This supports them to progress to higher-level qualifications or gain promotion at work. For example, apprentices take on the responsibility for the day-to-day information technology infrastructure at work. Apprentices use vocational language and terminology well and develop good speaking skills and, as a result, they are more confident to talk to customers and colleagues.
- Apprentices feel safe and work safely. They have a good understanding of health and safety and adopt safe working practices.
- Apprentices are respectful and demonstrate good behaviour at work and in college. They work well with their peers, employers, teachers and assessors.
- Apprentices undertake training in the 'Prevent' duty. However, the majority of apprentices do not have a depth of understanding in relation to the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation and the impact on their lives.
- Despite managers having a clear view and focus on the improvement of apprenticeship programmes, in a minority of programmes, such as management and accounting,

apprentices are not making the progress expected of them. Actions implemented to rectify this have not resulted in sufficient improvement.

- In too many cases, the quality of apprentices' progress reviews lacks clarity and their targets are too broad. Assessors often set targets that are based on awarding body criteria and the completion of units in the apprentices' qualifications rather than the specific detail of how the apprentice can develop their skills further.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- The college currently has 79 students receiving additional high needs funding. Students follow a range of work-related, personal development and vocational courses.
- Managers use the funding for students with high needs well to provide a positive learning environment for them. External agencies, healthcare professionals, parents and carers contribute to designing personalised programmes that build on students' prior attainment and enable them to progress to further study and employment.
- Support for students with high needs is good; well-trained and experienced staff ensure that they meet students' needs well. Support staff review the effectiveness of support plans regularly and reduce support levels where students make good progress in developing their independence.
- Assessment of students' starting points is detailed and effective. A strong collaborative approach between the college, students, their families and local authorities ensures that outcomes are clear and students follow courses that meet their individual needs and aspirations.
- Well-planned and well-managed transition arrangements ensure that students quickly adapt to college life. Managers ensure that support is well coordinated and specialist training implemented quickly. Staff work effectively with schools, external professionals and families to ensure that they meet all students' needs. For example, students accessing physiotherapy in the community require timetable adjustments to ensure that they are able to attend physiotherapy and still fulfil the requirements of their qualifications. Key support staff receive training to administer medication, enabling young people to attend college safely without disruption to their programmes. Students settle quickly onto their new programme.
- Managers place a strong focus on the promotion of English and mathematics in lessons and across the curriculum. Students learn to apply their skills to work settings and their daily lives well. For example, students check the expiry dates and rotate stock in the food bank, they learn to use money correctly to purchase meals in the café and develop greater independence through use of public transport timetables.
- Students' behaviour is good; teachers set high expectations in the classroom and students respond consistently well. For example, students respond well to teachers' requests to put away mobile phones if they are distracting lessons. Where students, in a small number of lessons, struggle to manage their behaviour, teachers use individual targets and strategies well to support them to improve their behaviour.
- Most teachers provide students with helpful feedback in lessons. Students understand what they are doing well and where they need to improve, and consequently improve the standard of their work. In a few instances, students do not receive feedback and

therefore do not learn to recognise and rectify errors.

- Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan learning that is both challenging and interesting. Teachers use technology well to motivate students to remain on task in lessons. Students use technology effectively as a tool to check the time, present their ideas, check their spelling and record their views.
- Students feel safe at college. They demonstrate safe working practices in teaching areas and work placements. They have an informed awareness of safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they have any concerns, both inside and outside college. For example, childcare students learn about their responsibilities for child protection and students recognise the risks associated with using the internet and take steps to keep themselves safe, through the blocking of unknown friend requests.
- Students develop good employability and independence skills. The large majority of students benefit from well-planned work experience and supported internships, which assist them to develop new skills to progress towards employment. For example, students learn to travel independently to college and the workplace; others confidently take on challenging roles and practical tasks in the college kitchen, producing and serving food. Students demonstrate confidence in the teamwork and communication required to carry out their roles.
- A minority of teachers do not set, monitor and record individuals' progress consistently well. Target-setting for a small number of students lacks focus to support students' individual needs and build on their prior achievements. Teachers are unclear about the progress students are making and, as a result, students do not make progress as quickly as they should.
- In a minority of lessons, students spend too long listening to the teacher and have limited opportunity to practise skills and ask questions to extend their understanding. Students do not make quick enough progress from their starting points.
- In a minority of lessons, staff provide too much support for students; staff make choices, answer questions on behalf of students and students do not progress as quickly as they should.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130736
Type of provider	Further education
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	4,471
Principal/CEO	Dr Thomas Moore
Telephone number	01254 55144
Website	www.blackburn.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	618	774	555	462	1,635	329	0	7
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	220	270	117	329	1	28		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	7		5		12			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	79							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Practical Refrigeration Training Centre Ltd							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal curriculum and quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the college.

Inspection team

Tracey Mace-Akroyd, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Cocker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joanna Stokes	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Bruce	Ofsted Inspector
Charlie Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Bernie White	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Hughes	Her Majesty's Inspector
Debra Forsythe-Conroy	Ofsted Inspector

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