

Blackburn College

Further Education College

Inspection dates

11–14 December 2018

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	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for students	Requires improvement	Provision for students with high needs	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Requires improvement	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Governors and previous senior leaders were too slow to take the necessary actions to improve the provision. Consequently, most of the weaknesses that were identified at the previous inspection have not yet been addressed.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not improved since the previous inspection and still requires improvement.
- In too many instances, teachers do not consider students' individual starting points when they plan, monitor and record the progress that they make. Consequently, students do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Too few students on A-level programmes achieve the high grades of which they are capable.
- The proportion of students who achieve qualifications in English and mathematics is low.
- The proportion of students who achieve a qualification in hairdressing and beauty therapy and construction is low, particularly at level 1.
- Attendance is low, particularly on English, mathematics, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and level 1 courses.

The provider has the following strengths

- Curriculum leaders, teachers, assessors and staff promote a culture of mutual respect and tolerance. Students behave well, they respect other people's views and work cooperatively together. Teachers develop students' and apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity and British values well.
- Students and apprentices develop the knowledge and technical skills they need for further study or work; consequently, most students and apprentices who stay on their course progress into further study, higher education or employment.
- Leaders have successfully fostered excellent relationships with local and regional partners and employers. This results in a curriculum that meets local and regional needs very well and provides high-quality work experience for students and apprentices.
- Students and apprentices have a positive attitude to learning. They take pride in their work. They are well motivated and develop effectively their confidence and skills.
- Managers and staff ensure that apprentices benefit from high-quality on- and off-the-job training.

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 no subcontracted provision.
- 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 and apprentices are from the most economically deprived local areas. Around a third of students and apprentices are of minority ethnic heritage and almost two thirds enrol at the college without having achieved five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. Blackburn with Darwen is a 'Prevent' duty priority area and 14% of the local population have no qualifications.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Governors and senior leaders must quickly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - taking swift and decisive actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment to enable students to make good progress and achieve their qualifications at the grades of which they are capable
 - ensuring that all teachers consider the starting points of students to plan and provide suitable learning activities that challenge students and apprentices, including the most and least able.
- Improve attendance rates, particularly in ESOL, English and mathematics and on level 1 courses, so that students attend their classes regularly, stay on programme and achieve their qualifications.
- Increase the proportion of students who achieve their English and mathematics qualifications.
- Improve rapidly the quality of courses at level 1, in particular hairdressing and beauty therapy and construction, to ensure that students achieve their qualifications.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Governors and former senior leaders did not respond swiftly enough in addressing the weaknesses found at the previous inspection. The actions they put in place were too slow to bring about the rapid and consistent improvements needed in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the progress that students make in gaining skills, knowledge and understanding. Consequently, governors and leaders have not rectified successfully the majority of weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.
- The interim principal and senior leadership team recognise that staff morale is low. The college was undergoing significant change, including restructuring and staff reductions, at the time of the inspection. The current leadership team is putting in place strategies to improve staff morale. For example, they have introduced staff forums to seek the views of staff and involve them more in decision making. However, it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of these strategies.
- Leaders and managers have recently put in place a more rigorous observation process. They have established a series of focused teaching and learning professional development workshops and individual coaching and mentoring sessions to support staff to improve their teaching practice. Staff who do not improve their teaching and learning practice no longer work at the college.
- The interim principal and newly established leadership team have worked hard over recent months to put in place strategies to improve the college. They have put several interventions in place recently that are starting to have a positive impact on the quality of education. For example, the number of students who attend regularly increased in 2017/18. Teaching and learning have improved on a few courses, for example in joinery, health science, photography, electrical installation and media.
- Curriculum leaders, teachers, assessors and staff have established a culture of tolerance and mutual respect. They promote equality and diversity and British values effectively in lessons and around college. Students and apprentices work cooperatively together and behave well in class and across the college campus.
- Leaders and managers evaluate accurately that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not of a consistently high standard across subjects and levels. The strategies they have implemented are starting to result in improvements to the practice of individual teachers. However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection and is still not of a consistently good standard.
- Leaders, managers and governors self-assess most of their weaknesses correctly. The improvement plan identifies the actions needed to bring about improvements. However, not all actions are precise enough to enable leaders and managers to measure the progress made or to put in place quickly additional actions when needed.
- Leaders and managers place a high priority on the development of students' and apprentices' English and mathematics skills. They have appointed a new coordinator and two curriculum leaders for English and mathematics. Managers have revised the strategy to develop English and mathematics across the college; however, the impact of this is yet

to be realised.

- Leaders and managers establish strong partnerships with employers and key stakeholders. They develop the curriculum to meet local and regional needs successfully. As a result, students and apprentices benefit from courses that lead into jobs and develop the skills they need for work. For example, students on the nursing cadet scheme experience working in hospital theatres, accident and emergency departments and oncology and surgical wards. Students on the level 1 military services course progress into the Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy.

The governance of the provider

- Governors have been far too slow to respond to the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. They have failed to take decisive and rapid action. Recently, governors with education backgrounds have been recruited. Consequently, governors have knowledge and understanding of the further education sector and now challenge leaders and managers more rigorously to improve.
- Governors have a greater oversight of the weaknesses of the college and the actions in place to bring about improvements. They now receive accurate board and committee papers. However, because leaders have only recently introduced strategies to improve the quality of provision, governors are unable to assess the full impact of the actions that have been taken.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have established effective arrangements with external agencies, such as mental health services, the police and the local authority. They refer students and apprentices to these agencies appropriately and promptly.
- The designated safeguarding officer is a senior manager with appropriate training. A governor with responsibility for safeguarding is also in place. Managers ensure that all new staff complete the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Staff and governors undertake appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training.
- Staff report effectively, and in a timely manner, any safeguarding concerns which the safeguarding team follow up promptly. The local area is a 'Prevent' priority area and leaders and managers have in place a suitable 'Prevent' duty risk register and action plan.
- Students and apprentices feel safe and most know how to recognise the signs associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not effective in too many subject areas. Following the previous inspection, governors and former senior leaders did not act quickly enough to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, the quality remains inconsistent throughout the college.
- Recently, a team of observers has started to evaluate systematically the quality of

teaching, learning and assessment to identify where improvements are needed. During the inspection, college observers identified accurately the strengths and weaknesses observed in lessons.

- In too many instances teachers' planning of teaching and learning does not take account of the needs of all students. Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are too low. Teachers do not challenge students sufficiently and, as a result, students make slow progress. Often the most able students have to wait for others to catch up.
- Teachers assess accurately the support needs of students with high needs. However, teachers in vocational lessons do not use this information to deploy learning support assistants effectively. As a result, in too many instances students with high needs progress too slowly because they do not receive appropriate support.
- Not all teachers set students aspirational individual targets against which they can measure their progress. Teachers do not review the medium-term targets early enough, which means that students do not know the progress they make. Consequently, a significant minority of current students do not make the progress expected of them.
- Teachers do not assess students' written work and assignments thoroughly enough to help them to improve rapidly. Too many teachers do not provide students with helpful feedback. They do not tell students precisely enough what they have done well and where they can make improvements. English errors are not identified and corrected routinely in students' written work. Consequently, students continue to make the same errors.
- In too many instances, teachers do not routinely ensure that students make progress in developing their English and mathematical skills in vocational lessons. A minority of teachers plan activities successfully that allow students to apply and reinforce the language and mathematical skills they need for work. For example, engineering students develop and use their mathematical knowledge when they learn about electrical resistance.
- Teachers develop successfully students' reading and writing skills on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. However, they do not give sufficient attention to ensuring that these students develop their oral fluency. This impedes their ability to communicate effectively with English speakers, for example in their communities and workplaces.
- Teachers ensure that students enrol on to the most appropriate courses at the correct level. Teachers identify students' starting points in English and mathematics at the start of their course. Students' skills for their chosen vocational sector are assessed appropriately. However, teachers do not use the results of the assessments routinely to plan individuals' learning programmes.
- Students on study programmes develop further their vocational knowledge and skills through beneficial work experience on employers' premises. For example, college managers have developed good work placements in a hospital trust, a large retailer, and a motor manufacturer. Teachers use these placements effectively to prepare students well for work. Teachers ensure that students with high needs on supported internship programmes benefit from good-quality work experience.
- Qualified and experienced teachers and assessors plan apprentices' off-the-job training carefully. Teachers and assessors work closely with employers to plan and review

apprentices' training programmes. They make sure that apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and understanding which are of immediate use to them and their employers.

- Students and apprentices have access to good-quality learning resources in the sports centre, television studio, hair salons and motor vehicle workshop. Students and apprentices develop a very good range of knowledge and practical skills in these learning environments. Apprentices transfer the skills they gain to the workplace because of the resources they use in college. Students and apprentices follow the correct health and safety practices and procedures successfully in workshops and across the college.
- Students and apprentices have a good understanding of British values. They know how these values relate to their personal and working lives. Students and apprentices have, for example, become increasingly more aware of the importance of mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. For example, Muslim apprentices explain the meaning of Ramadan to their non-Muslim colleagues.
- Teachers' promotion of equality and diversity is good. Students and apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity and the importance of inclusion. For example, in media make-up, students research how, in 1928, women were given the vote. Their research has given them a good understanding of the social and political impact that women's votes have on women and society.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Students and apprentices show high levels of mutual respect and tolerance towards each other, to teachers and to visitors. This makes the atmosphere in the college welcoming and friendly. They respect other people's views and work cooperatively together. Students' and apprentices' behaviour is very good. Apprentices understand how their behaviour impacts on their employers' businesses.
- Students enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding through a range of external work placements and voluntary events in the local community. For example, students plan, make goods for and help to organise an annual 'National Festival of Making'. Construction students make planters for the 'Youth Zone' in Blackburn. Sport students work with the local authority on a project to encourage primary school children to become more active.
- Students develop the technical skills they need for their chosen job or career. Students benefit from work-related activities in practical work environments. As a result, they work to commercial standards and meet the expected deadlines. For example, beauty students provide a range of beauty treatments to external clients in the commercial salon.
- Most students and apprentices develop the skills and the behaviours they need for work. Hairdressing students learn how to communicate effectively with their clients in the commercial salon. Apprentices receive positive feedback from employers for the knowledge and skills they develop. For example, business apprentices increase their confidence when they deal with customers and develop team-building and problem-solving skills.
- Students and apprentices feel safe in the college and in the workplace. They demonstrate and adhere to healthy and safe working practices in practical lessons, in workshops, when

working online and in the workplace. Students and apprentices know who to report any safeguarding issues to if they arise.

- Staff work successfully with a wide range of external services to provide effective impartial careers information, advice and guidance to students at the start of and during their programmes of study. Consequently, the vast majority who remain on their course progress successfully on to further study or employment.
- Managers place a high priority on ensuring that students and apprentices understand the local community that they live and study in. Managers have good links with the local police and 'Prevent' team and refer students appropriately to the Lancashire and Cumbria 'Channel' team. Most students have a basic understanding, and apprentices have a good understanding, of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and know where to go to share any concerns. However, students do not have a good understanding of how this applies in their lives or at work.
- Attendance rates, while improved overall, remain low in ESOL, English, mathematics and in level 1 lessons. Attendance on vocational courses and on A-level courses is high. Apprentices' attendance is high at the off-the-job training sessions they attend in college. Students and apprentices arrive for lessons on time and ready to work.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Data provided by leaders for 2017/18 suggests that the proportion of students aged 16 to 18 who achieve their qualifications has declined very slightly since the previous inspection. The proportion of 16 to 18-year-old students who achieve their qualification is low on courses at level 1, largely due to poor achievements in functional skills English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students who achieve qualifications at level 2 are low on courses in construction, engineering and hairdressing and beauty therapy. The proportion of students who successfully achieve a qualification is high on arts, media, health and social care, history, information and communication technology, science and social sciences courses.
- The proportion of students who achieve their qualification at level 3 has increased since the previous year and is now high. When compared to the previous year, the proportion of students on vocational level 3 courses who achieve a high grade has increased. In a very few subjects it remains low, for example on the extended diploma in sport, business and engineering.
- A significant minority of students on A-level courses do not achieve the high grades of which they are capable. For example, on courses in English language and literature, mathematics and history the proportion of students who achieve a high grade is low. On courses in law, psychology and biology, the proportion of students who achieve a high grade is high.
- The proportion of students who achieve a functional skills qualification in English and mathematics, though improved, remains low. While too many students do not achieve level 4 or above in GCSE English and mathematics, many students now improve their grade compared to their entry point.
- Achievement rates for adult students has not improved since the previous inspection and

is low, mainly because too many students leave their course early. Achievement rates are particularly low in a small number of courses, including construction, engineering and health and social care. The proportion of adults who gain a qualification at level 2 and level 3 is low. The majority of adults study at level 1 and a high proportion of these students achieve their qualification.

- The vast majority of students for whom the college receives high-needs funding make the progress expected of them. They develop their practical, employability and communication skills well on vocational courses. They develop their confidence and independence successfully and most achieve their qualifications.
- There are significant variances between different groups of students. Male 16 to 18-year-old White British students achieve less well than their female peers. Students aged 16 to 18 and adults who have a learning difficulty or disability achieve less well than their peers. Students who take up additional support from their teachers achieve much better than those who do not. A high proportion of students of Asian, African and Indian origin achieve their qualifications.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications by their planned end date has risen since the previous inspection. The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualification at level 3 is high, but it is low for apprentices studying at level 2. Most current apprentices make at least their expected progress.
- In 2017/18, the proportion of apprentices in engineering and construction who gained their qualification in the planned time is low. The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualification in the planned time is high in health and social care, information and communication technology (ICT) and business.
- Managers have introduced a new tracking system to monitor students' progress but not all staff use it effectively. Of the current students, around half make the progress expected of them from their starting points. This varies between the different subject areas and teachers.
- Most current students and apprentices make good progress in developing their practical skills in their chosen subjects. The vast majority of students progress to further study, higher education or employment. Most apprentices gain permanent employment with their employer following completion of their programmes.
- Managers' strategies to increase the number of students who remain on their course in the current year have so far been successful. A greater number of students remain on their course this year when compared to the same time last year and retention is now high.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- At the time of the inspection, around two thirds of the college's students are on study programmes. There are 2,807 full-time students age 16 to 19. Most students are enrolled on vocational programmes in public services, creative arts, engineering, construction, travel and tourism, information and communications technology, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health and social care, business, and hospitality and catering. Approximately 283

students are enrolled on A-level programmes.

- The quality of teaching and learning on study programmes varies significantly across the different subjects and teachers. It is not yet consistently of a high standard. The expectations that teachers set for students are too low in too many subjects.
- Teachers do not plan lessons that consider the differing abilities of students. In too many instances, teachers set work that is too easy for the most able and too hard for the less able. As a result, students do not reach their full potential.
- On a significant minority of courses, teachers do not monitor students' progress closely enough. They fail to put in place the necessary actions to improve the progress that students make. Teachers do not routinely provide helpful feedback to students on what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers on courses in electrical installation, carpentry, hairdressing, public services and media make-up monitor the progress of students effectively and give them feedback to help them to improve.
- Attendance is low in English, mathematics and level 1 classes; however, on A-level courses attendance is high.
- Students benefit from good-quality external work placements and voluntary events that help them to develop the skills they need for their future employment. For example, students who want to progress into the bio-science sector gain valuable experience by working in a laboratory at the local hospital. Public service students improve their fitness levels and learn about the importance of team working when they take part in activities organised by the armed services.
- Students develop effectively their practical and employability skills on vocational programmes and, as a result, they are equipped for the wider world of work. For example, catering students work in the college restaurant and learn how to cook food to realistic timescales.
- Teachers successfully develop students' awareness of British values and equality and diversity through a range of effective strategies, so that they understand how they apply in their lives and at work. Public service students research human rights and discuss how these are relevant in the public service professions and society. Childcare students discuss and research about understanding and accepting the cultural differences between different people.
- Students benefit from effective careers advice and guidance. This means that most students who stay on their course to the end progress to further education or employment. Teachers prepare students well for the transition to higher-level courses. For example, level 3 business students attend a regional university to assist them in developing their Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) personal statements. Consequently, the majority of students on level 3 courses progress to university.

Adult learning programmes

Requires improvement

- There are around 1,705 students on adult programmes. They study on a range of

programmes from entry level to level 6. Almost half study at entry level and level 1 and around one fifth study on level 3. Adult students' programmes are available across 13 subject areas. The largest areas include ESOL, English and mathematics.

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies between different subjects and teachers and in too many instances is not of a high enough standard. In too many instances, teachers do not plan to develop students' English, mathematics and ICT skills in lessons.
- Teachers do not use the information they collect about students' starting points to plan and implement learning that provides enough challenge for the most able students. Teachers do not set aspirational targets that ensure individual students make the progress of which they are capable. Too often, targets set are identical for all students, and this limits the pace of progress. Teachers on access to higher education courses set students aspirational targets and monitor effectively the progress they make against them.
- Attendance is low, particularly on ESOL, GCSE in English and mathematics, basic skills English and mathematics and level 1 courses. However, teachers ensure that students catch up using a range of resources, including the use of the virtual learning platform, emails and support via the telephone.
- In too many instances, teachers do not provide students with helpful and specific feedback on how to improve their work. On access to higher education courses, students receive helpful feedback, and this helps them improve their work.
- Managers and teachers develop effective 'skills for work' courses, which they design with partners. This results in customised short courses that successfully reintegrate students with low prior attainment or who are not in work. Almost all the students complete their course and over half progress to employment.
- Effective and growing partnerships, which include Job Centre Plus, the National Health Service Trust and newly introduced courses at the drug and alcohol recovery centre, benefit students by providing routes into work.
- Teachers ensure that students in receipt of support with a declared disability have suitable reasonable adjustments in place which means that they make their expected progress. Teachers routinely set work for students to complete in between sessions. Most students produce work at the required standard.
- Teachers' promotion of equality, diversity and British values in lessons is effective. Students show a good understanding and application within their work. They behave well, work cooperatively together and show mutual respect to each other. The majority are aware of and can describe both British values and the college pledge that teachers use to set ground rules for tolerance and acceptable behaviour.
- Students on vocational courses value and benefit from industry standard facilities that allow them to develop the skills and expected behaviours they need for work. For example, students on motor vehicle courses learn how to repair vehicles to a professional standard. Joinery students develop the skills they need to work on a commercial construction site.
- Students feel safe and work safely in college workshops and when working online. They know who to go to if they have any concerns. Most students do not have a good

understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe from radicalisation and extremism.

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teachers and assessors ensure that in both on- and off-the-job training, apprentices develop new skills and knowledge. Apprentices demonstrate skilfully the skills and knowledge they gain that benefit their employers' businesses.
- Apprentices receive valuable support from their employers. In a few cases, they provide off-the-job training from external sources. For example, a hairdressing apprentice was shown how to use specific hair colouring products correctly after receiving training from a supplier's representative.
- Teachers and assessors have good experience and knowledge in their respective subjects. Teachers and assessors use technical language effectively and, as a result, apprentices use this knowledge to communicate effectively with their co-workers. For example, level 5 business apprentices describe how they use the communication skills they gain to produce written reports to professional high standards.
- Apprentices benefit from well-resourced facilities that enable them to develop their practical skills well, using a range of modern up-to-date equipment. For example, level 2 joinery apprentices can interpret technical scaled drawings to produce a full-size technical drawing correctly.
- Apprentices produce high-quality written work that is neat and well presented. They take pride in their work. For example, level 2 plumbing apprentices were able to produce technical drawings to illustrate a domestic hot water system and label equipment correctly.
- Assessors use questioning effectively during apprentices' reviews to verify and assess the skills the apprentices develop in the workplace. Assessors pose additional questions that probe and challenge the apprentices' deeper understanding well.
- Most current apprentices make at least their expected progress. However, in a small number of subject areas, such as engineering, apprentices do not make the expected progress. Managers check the progress of apprentices and ensure that where apprentices make slower than expected progress, staff put the necessary actions into place to help apprentices catch up.
- Assessors identify apprentices' starting points at the start of their programme and use this to match their individual skills development to the needs of their employers. Assessors use this regularly during progress reviews to assess the progress made and to set new targets for further development. This is effective and helps apprentices to improve their knowledge and skills.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity and British values. Apprentices understand how their conduct and behaviour affect the reputation and success of their employer. Attendance is high in the training sessions they attend in college. Apprentices develop their communication skills well, which enable them to communicate effectively with clients and customers.
- Apprentices feel safe in the workplace and in college. Apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of how to work safely in the workplace and in college workshops.

Apprentices have a thorough understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and they are able to give examples of extremist groups. They are able to discuss how these groups use violence to promote extremist ideologies.

- In a very few subject areas, teachers and assessors do not plan the development of apprentices' skills well enough. They focus targets on unit completion rather than on individual apprentices being able to develop the skills needed in relation to their starting points or what they do at work.
- Teachers do not set target grades at the start of their programme for apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships. As a result, they do not prepare apprentices well enough for their end-point assessment.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers and assessors do not take account of apprentices' prior experience and starting points when they plan lessons. This means that apprentices do not make rapid enough progress in developing new skills.
- Too many apprentices, particularly at level 2 in engineering and construction, leave their course early or do not complete in their planned time. The proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship within the planned time is high on level 3 courses.

Provision for students with high needs

Requires improvement

- At the time of the inspection, there were 77 students who receive high-needs funding. Of these, nine are on a supported internship programme, 25 study on academic programmes and 42 study on a vocational programme. Students study on courses from entry level to level 3.
- Support coordinators work closely with curriculum teams so that all teachers are aware of the individual strategies and adaptations necessary for each student. However, in too many instances, teachers do not routinely use the detailed support information or support strategies when they plan and implement lessons. This means that a large majority of students do not make sufficient progress or develop their independent learning skills sufficiently well enough.
- On the supported internship programme and in functional skills English classes, teachers do not provide helpful feedback. This means that students have a limited understanding of their progress and do not know what they need to do to improve their work.
- On entry level programmes, teachers do not set sufficiently challenging targets and progress towards these targets is not reviewed in a timely manner. Consequently, teachers and support staff are slow to recognise the necessary adaptations they need to make in order for students to achieve their full potential. A minority of teachers do not direct support staff well enough, which hinders the progress that students make.
- Teachers and staff do not ensure that initial advice and guidance for progression into adulthood and the world of work is effective for students on academic and vocational programmes. Managers rightly recognise this, and they have begun to develop their progression evenings to include a wider range of external agencies and community organisations. However, it is too soon to measure the impact of this.
- Managers use the education, health and care plans and the assessment of students' starting points to accurately allocate high-needs funding. However, senior leaders do not check that students receive high-quality support throughout their learning programmes.

Consequently, in too many instances, interventions are not made to ensure that all students make good progress.

- The large majority of teachers plan an effective transition into college, so students benefit from support that is in place from the outset. Consequently, they settle into college well. For example, teachers organise taster days and new-parent evenings, and new students spend a day in college before the start of their course. However, in a small minority of cases, teachers place students who have high needs in taster classes without ensuring that teachers and learning support staff understand their individual needs.
- On the supported internship programme, students develop the skills they need for voluntary work through good-quality external work placements. This allows students to develop well such skills as timekeeping and following instructions in a variety of contexts. For example, students start with a half day of work experience in the first term and will progress on to five days in the spring term.
- Staff on the supported internship programme have high expectations of their students to achieve positive destinations. Consequently, in 2017/18, the large majority of students progressed into sustained voluntary work or employment.
- Students demonstrate good behaviour and a mutual respect for both their peers and their teachers. Teachers and staff ensure that students integrate well into their vocational or academic group.
- Support coordinators work closely with curriculum teams so that all teachers are aware of the individual strategies and adaptations necessary so that all students can make at least their expected progress from the outset.
- Support coordinators work well with external agencies and therapy specialists to ensure that students have access to further therapies when required. For example, students with asthma benefit from speech and language therapy and students use specialist technology to help them do their work.
- Students feel safe and are safe. In too many instances, students who have high needs do not understand what the 'Prevent' duty means to them and how they can protect themselves in the wider world.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130736
Type of provider	General Further Education College
Age range of students	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	4,614
Principal/CEO	Mr Graham Towse
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 students (excluding apprenticeships)	600	840	619	545	1,588	297	–	23
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	120	143	77	132	3	14		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	–		–		–			
Number of students aged 14 to 16	None							
Number of students for which the provider receives high-needs funding	77							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal, curriculum and quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider'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 students, staff 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 provider.

Inspection team

Andrea Machell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Cameron Brandwood	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maura Cummins	Ofsted Inspector
Thomas Fay	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Ashurst	Ofsted Inspector
Charles Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Bev Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Margaret Garai	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Young	Ofsted Inspector
Ken Fisher	Ofsted Inspector

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Employer View

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