

Blackpool and the Fylde College

General further education college

Inspection dates		7–11 October 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding-1
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is outstanding because:

- Learners thoroughly enjoy coming to college and most achieve exceptionally well. Progression rates onto higher education and employment are very high. The performance of learners taking qualifications in the workplace is outstanding.
- The college is very successful at engaging learners from disadvantaged groups and ensuring that they stay on course and succeed. Outcomes are very positive for learners from a wide range of groups, such as young people in care and unemployed adults on job-search programmes.
- Teachers set high expectations for their learners. They use their industrial and professional skills exceptionally well to make lessons interesting and relevant, leading to high-quality learning.
- Outstanding academic and pastoral support enables learners to make excellent progress in developing personal and work-related skills.
- The college provides learners with a host of high-quality enrichment activities that build up their confidence and encourage them to be aspirational in their ambitions.
- Excellent governance and college leadership promote high standards successfully for staff and learners, and ensure that the college responds very effectively to the wide range of challenging needs within the local area.
- Partnership work with employers, schools and a range of other organisations is exceptional and makes a significant contribution to the learners' experience and success, and to the local community.
- Through the highly-effective promotion of equality and diversity over a sustained period of time, respect, tolerance for others and inclusiveness permeate the college community. Every individual is valued and encouraged to believe they can succeed. Learners develop their understanding of equality and diversity as a result of the way staff thread this seamlessly through their work in the classroom, and through excellent additional activities that are both fun and informative.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- The college should ensure that actions implemented recently to improve the small number of underperforming courses are effective, and that learners currently on those courses achieve to the same high standard as learners in the rest of the college by the end of the academic year 2013/14.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
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- A high proportion of learners enter the college with low levels of previous attainment and they make excellent progress in gaining qualifications and developing personal and work-related skills.
- Success rates for learners aged between 16 and 18, which is the largest group of learners in the college, are outstanding. Success rates for adult learners are above the national average. Action taken by the college has led to no significant differences in success rates between male and female learners and between those from different ethnic backgrounds. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities succeed well at the college and achieve in line with other learners.
- On a very low proportion of courses, success rates are not as good. This includes the small AS provision, which has been reorganised in the current year to meet learners' needs more appropriately.
- Trainees on work-based programmes achieve well. Success rates are outstanding for those taking National Vocational Qualifications in the work place. Success rates for apprentices are good; achievement within the planned time frame dipped in 2012/13 but was still above the national average. Apprentices develop good workplace skills. For example, apprentices in health and social care reflect well on their practice and improve the service they provide to users of food banks.
- The standard of learners' work is high on most programmes. Students are extremely enthusiastic about their learning and really enjoy coming to college. They show a mature approach to their work and value how it relates to their future careers. Their behaviour is excellent. However, in a few classes attendance and punctuality do not meet the high expectations set by the college.
- Learners talk with confidence about the work they are engaged in and the progress they have made. They use the skills they have developed to work independently very effectively.
- As a result of these significant strengths, learners are very well prepared for the next step when leaving college. The proportion of learners progressing to employment or university is very high.
- The achievement of learners from vulnerable groups is excellent. The college offers programmes for a high number of unemployed adults and outcomes from these are outstanding. The proportion of learners from the 'sector skills academies' programme who progress into employment is well above what is seen nationally. The 'Build Up' programme in construction is very successful at getting people back into work. Young people in care succeed extremely well at the college.
- Many learners win national or international competitions and gain prestigious awards, which help them in their applications to university or for employment. For example, learners in catering and hospitality have had success several years running in the national Nestle Toque D'Or competition.

- A high proportion of learners develop their English and mathematics skills successfully in their vocational area. Success rates on functional skills courses in English and mathematics are outstanding. This was the main qualification taken by learners in these subjects last year. A smaller number took GCSE examinations; success rates for adults were above average but were too low for learners aged between 16 and 18. The college has reorganised the provision this year and learners currently on these courses are making good progress.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment overall are outstanding. On-the-job training for apprentices is good. Teaching and learning are key to the college's success, and there has been a strong and successful focus on improvement. Learners make excellent progress as a result of highly effective teaching, support and guidance from staff.
- In the high proportion of good or better lessons teachers plan well and ensure that a range of activities challenge learners to achieve their learning goals. Teachers and learners negotiate learning objectives in many lessons and refer to these outcomes throughout the session to ensure they are achieved.
- Teachers use a range of questioning techniques very well to challenge learners' understanding, to reinforce learning and to check recall of knowledge from previous lessons and from workplace activities. They know learners well and encourage and praise them.
- Many teachers use their vocational experience to teach lessons in an industrial context and plan a range of activities which develop learners' employability and work-related skills, such as visits to workplaces, visiting speakers and periods of work placement. One profoundly deaf student carried out an exciting work placement in a spa at Lake Como, supported by the college. Teachers integrate sustainability themes innovatively into the curriculum and many learners contribute to environmental activities.
- Staff link theory to real life to enable learners to gain a good understanding during activities, for example, in a childcare session, the assessor asked apprentices to summarise their learning from a previous session into a rhyme or jingle. Teachers take risks and experiment with innovative techniques in their teaching and they excite and encourage school link groups through role play and simulations.
- The college has a culture of high expectations of its learners, and staff strive to ensure that all learners achieve their full potential. Many learners are encouraged, through initial advice and guidance, to apply for the highest-level courses of which they are capable, and they are motivated, encouraged and supported not only to achieve but to progress to higher education or employment. Aspirational posters around the college reinforce the college's message of excellence and high expectation. The learners benefit from working alongside higher-education students in areas where these courses are offered by the college.
- Teachers set learners aspirational targets which encourage them to exceed their minimum target grades. Teachers monitor learners' progress regularly using the electronic tracking system, and maintain a strong focus on learners' progress and achievement during designated 'Stop the Track' days. Parents can and do access the electronic tracker. Apprentices are reviewed regularly in the workplace; however, in some cases, target-setting for them lacked detail.
- Learners understand the importance of good skills in English and mathematics in helping them to gain employment and succeed. Teachers correct spelling and grammar routinely in assignment work and many integrate English and mathematics in their vocational lessons; for example, one assessor encouraged the employer to help the apprentice improve his spelling by checking job cards which the learner completes in the garage. Effective discrete English and mathematics classes are provided in vocational areas where examples are relevant to learners.
- The highly visible and centrally located student-services office provides an excellent and well-used range of services for learners. This includes practical advice on finance, transport, part-

time employment, pastoral advice, career guidance and support with higher-education applications and job search, including interview techniques. Learners value this support, which enables them to attend and complete their courses.

- Staff have developed the very positive environment of fairness, courtesy and mutual respect which is stated in the college's vision. Teachers adjust lesson content to ensure it is equally suitable to all learners. For example, in a lesson on evaluating and analysing the performance of players in team sports, the teacher first used badminton, a sport where both male and female learners had equal interest and similar abilities, to help them develop their skills of analysis. Staff incorporate diversity themes into teaching, for example business students discussed the place of fast-food burger chains in India and how global businesses take account of cultural and faith factors.

Health and Social Care and Early Years

14-16 part-time provision
16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding and leads to excellent outcomes for learners. Success rates on all courses bar one exceed the national average. The standard of learners' work is very good and an above-average number of advanced learners achieve high grades. In 2012/13 over half of the learners in this area progressed within the college and almost half onto higher education or into relevant employment.
- Teachers have very high expectations of learners and use an extensive range of activities and approaches to motivate them. They set ambitious tasks in lessons and provide excellent support to enable the learners to extend their learning. In one lesson, intermediate learners were introduced to the new topic 'becoming a reflective practitioner'. They were asked to write a reflective account related to their work experience and assess each other's work.
- Verbal feedback in lessons is encouraging and motivates the learners to be successful in achieving their learning goals and career aspirations. Learners develop a very good understanding of English and mathematics skills within vocational lessons.
- Teachers encourage learners to develop as independent learners, challenge each other positively, assess each other and work collaboratively to succeed. Teachers have developed some outstanding and innovative e-learning materials where learners use three-dimensional camcorders to record assessments and prepare projects.
- Staff use their expert subject knowledge and vocational experience to help learners to develop very good knowledge, skills and understanding of complex theoretical concepts. The learners are confident in applying these to health and social-care settings. For example, in one lesson, learners were devising an induction plan for a child making the transition from nursery to reception class. The teacher used her knowledge of the sector to enliven the discussion about the work of the 'school transition team'. The adult learners in the group were also encouraged to share their own experiences with the rest of the learners.
- Teachers' support for learners is outstanding. Staff and learners demonstrate an ethos of mutual respect. Learners value highly the support they receive both in and out of the classroom. Managers and staff ensure that curriculum delivery meets the needs of learners and design programmes of study for those who have difficulties which prevent them from attending regularly. Teachers take time to give excellent career advice and guidance and are readily available to learners.
- Tutorial support is outstanding. Thorough initial assessment leads to learners' needs being identified quickly and accurately, ensuring effective support is put in place. Teachers monitor learners' progress closely using electronic individual learning plans. They meet regularly with learners in individual tutorials and set targets with them which are specific and time bound.

Teachers encourage learners to aim for higher achievement in their studies and to set their own weekly targets. This results in learners being ambitious about their progress and achievement.

- Teachers make excellent use of assessment to give detailed written feedback to encourage and guide learners in how to improve. Learners’ work is annotated by teachers and spelling and grammar mistakes are corrected.
- The management of work placement is outstanding. Learners are prepared thoroughly for work through weekly vocational practice sessions. This enables them to develop their employability skills, including communication, reflective practice and professionalism. The learners also enjoy the opportunity to share their work placement experiences and link theory with practice effectively.
- Learners take advantage of a comprehensive range of health, social care and early years work placement opportunities. This greatly increases their chances of employment and opens up a variety of career options.
- The college has extensive and effective links with employers. One partnership with the NHS and social services has resulted in the development of a cadet programme. This has resulted in learners being able to work within clinical settings which are not normally open to young people. It also gives the learners an advantage when they apply for careers in health or social care. Learners undertaking this programme speak about the life-changing benefits they are deriving from it.
- Learners enjoy taking part in a comprehensive range of enrichment activities where they develop their social and personal skills. Staff are very proactive in assisting learners to prepare for Worldskills competitions, where they have been very successful.
- Equality and diversity are promoted very well within the curriculum. In one lesson, learners were presented with different eras ranging from the 1800s to the 1960s. Each era had a statement relating to equality and diversity and learners were asked to choose which they would prefer to live in. This stimulated thought-provoking discussions where learners voiced their opinions and attitudes openly. Learners were confident in questioning and challenging each other. The discussion was managed skilfully by the teacher who was also able to guide the learners to give some relevant examples from their work experience.

<p>Engineering and motor vehicle</p> <p>16-19 study programmes</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p>	<p>Outstanding</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and reflect the very high and consistent proportion of learners who gain their intended qualifications. Learners benefit from excellent support at all stages in their course.
- Learning in engineering is interesting, lively and provides good stimulus and challenge for the more-able learners. Teachers have high expectations of their learners. They motivate them to extend their knowledge and experience beyond achieving their qualifications. For example, motor vehicle learners have the opportunity to participate in ‘Formula Renault’ race car preparation.
- Teachers are vocationally well qualified and use their recent industrial experience to teach lessons in an industrial context. They make very effective reference to recent examples from industry to illustrate key points in the lessons and to extend learners’ awareness. As a result learners are interested, motivated, achieve very well and make excellent progress.
- The development of learners’ employability skills is excellent. Learners work enthusiastically on realistic engineering tasks. For example, learners in manufacturing engineering use computer

numerical control machines to manufacture complex engineering components. Motorsport learners use the very good college workshops to carry out a full conversion of a standard car into a rally competition car.

- In almost all lessons, teachers plan their lessons very well. They take into account learners' initial assessment to improve the learning of individual students. They use highly effective and clearly-focused questions to engage all learners and to check their knowledge and understanding.
- The emphasis on health and safety is strong. Learners feel safe working in motor vehicle and engineering workshops. Learners carry out risk assessment and identify hazards associated with working with equipment and machinery. They are aware of current health and safety regulations and legislation. In one lesson, marine engineering learners acquired very good skills in the correct use of respiratory protective equipment, escape and rescue equipment, and avoiding hazards associated with enclosed spaces onboard vessels.
- The use of information technology to support learning is very good. Learners use the college's virtual learning environment extensively to support their studies and to develop their independent learning. Engineering learners use computer-aided design and specialist computer software well to support their assignment and project work. For example, learners on electronics courses use computer software to design prototypes and test circuits for industry related projects. Motor vehicle learners use the industry standard software to access vehicle manufacturers' specifications and this contributes to their development of the broader skills relevant to employment.
- Support for learners is excellent. Workshop technicians, educational support workers and learning support tutors work very well with each other to ensure that learners make excellent progress. Learners value the support they receive, both in and outside lessons.
- Assessment of learning is effectively planned and managed, and is well understood by learners. The quality of learners' written work is very good. Learners write good technical assignments that often incorporate high-quality annotated diagrams and graphical work. Teachers mark learners' work thoroughly and write detailed and constructive comments so that learners know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.
- The development of learners' English and mathematics skills is excellent. Mathematics is embedded very well in all lessons. Learners use equipment and tools such as multimeters and micrometers, measure, quantify and carry out calculations through a range of tasks to develop their mathematics skills. Teachers use technical vocabulary to enhance learners' understanding of engineering terminology. Teachers correct learners' spelling and grammar thoroughly.
- Information, advice and guidance for learners are excellent. Teachers and college staff advise learners on appropriate college courses, higher-education progression routes and career opportunities. Learners are highly supportive of the help they receive with completing their UCAS application forms and selecting appropriate universities.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity strongly. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues which are covered during the induction programmes. Learners demonstrate high levels of respect for each other and for their teachers. As a result of college staff teaching lessons in schools, the proportion of female learners in engineering and motor vehicle is much higher than typically found in similar colleges. In practical sessions, male and female learners work productively with each other and all progress extremely well.

Construction**Apprenticeships**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in good outcomes for learners. Despite a decline from the previous year, overall apprenticeship success rates remain above the national average. Apprentices make good progress and the proportion of apprentices achieving within planned timescales is high and well above similar groups of apprentices nationally. Apprentices develop very good employability skills, produce work to a high standard, and win regional skills competitions regularly.
- Apprentices benefit from well-resourced construction facilities and experienced teachers who ensure that they make good progress in lessons. In the most effective lessons, teachers draw on their industrial experience and link theory to workplace practice effectively, helping to reinforce apprentices' understanding. Most teachers set challenging individual learning outcomes and encourage apprentices to work independently. In a few lessons teachers fail to check apprentices' understanding often enough.
- Apprentices are motivated, enjoy their work, and develop high-quality skills quickly. For example, plastering apprentices who were close to completing their course worked on a complex decorative plastering task from a higher level.
- Teachers are passionate about their trade, which invigorates apprentices' enthusiasm to learn. Staff are well qualified and motivated to help apprentices to achieve. Teachers communicate well with apprentices, which ensures that the vast majority of them make rapid progress and remain on task. However, a minority of lessons are not structured well, with the result that learners lose interest.
- Employers value the highly effective support provided by the college. Apprentices work safely in the workplace and demonstrate good skills. For example, an apprentice joiner fitted a quality kitchen for a customer, under minimal supervision.
- Apprentices use the college's virtual learning environment regularly to support their learning in and out of the classroom. However, some teachers' use of information technology during lessons requires further development, with opportunities missed to integrate these technologies to make learning more active and engaging.
- Apprentices undertake thorough initial assessments to measure their attainment at the start of the programme. Any support needs are identified quickly and learners benefit from effective additional support in lessons. Individual learning plans are adequate and include all necessary information.
- Assessment is thorough and frequent. Written and verbal feedback is prompt and constructive enabling apprentices to know how to improve. Apprentices' portfolios are well organised and include a range of assessment evidence. High-quality, short-term measurable targets are set to help apprentices achieve functional skills in English and mathematics. However, many targets set for the achievement of their vocational qualifications are too vague and do not include sufficient input from employers. Opportunities are missed to set targets to improve apprentices' personal and social skills where issues have been identified.
- Learners understand the importance of English and mathematics and how they can enhance their employability skills. Teachers and assessors integrate mathematics very well into lessons and reviews. For example, apprentices on a plumbing course worked successfully on calculations associated with the legal heights for boilers and water tanks. However, teachers do not always correct spelling mistakes in apprentices' work, and written work in some portfolios is unmarked.
- Advice and guidance are good. Apprentices receive clear and timely information regarding progression routes to further their career. Induction is highly effective and apprentices can discuss confidently how it supports their learning. Apprentices' attendance and punctuality are good and employers appreciate the college's effective attendance management.

- Staff and students promote equality and diversity through their behaviour and high expectations. In many lessons, teachers introduce equality and diversity topics related to their trade to help raise learners' understanding. For example, in one lesson, apprentices were introduced to famous structures and inventions in the construction industry and discussed if they were designed by a man or woman. When questioned, learners identify confidently situations that could lead to equality or diversity issues.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, which reflects the historically variable learners' retention and success rates. Staff have implemented a number of changes to improve learners' experiences. These include better-sequenced curriculum content and early support where learners exhibit poor attendance or slow progress. Learners are starting to respond positively to the much-improved emphasis on punctuality and a readiness to learn.
- The majority of classroom-based learning is appropriately planned to promote learning, link with previously learnt concepts and occupational practice. Learners participate well and exhibit a positive attitude with staff, other learners and clients. Directed study outside lessons is an integral part of learners' programmes but the content is often peripheral to the topic or its importance is not sufficiently shared with learners. As a result too many choose not to complete the work.
- Tutors develop a supportive learning environment that builds learners' confidence and encourages them to question and ask for guidance. In the best lessons, tutors use good reflective exercises or questioning to ascertain learners' previous knowledge then build on this effectively. They plan a diverse and interesting range of learning activities that appeal to learners and extend their experience. During a role-play session on clients' complaints, a tutor's persistence in making learners consider business economics encouraged them to modify their initial impulse to resolve everything with potentially costly services.
- Learners on nail technology courses build a wealth of assessment evidence, including exquisite and delicate nail art, as they prepare for a series of themed class competitions. Hairdressing tutors plan interesting seasonal projects and themes to develop specific hairdressing skills. However, tutors do not provide learners with sufficient information to reflect on and judge their level of learning and identify development needs.
- In too many sessions teachers do not share learning outcomes consistently with learners and in a minority of classes it is not always evident how planned activities aid and extend learning. Not all tutors critique finished work systematically and provide detailed feedback on how adaptations or alternative techniques would improve learners' work.
- An appropriate resource of electronic learning material is available to aid learners' research. Although improving, the use of technology in formal teaching is not utilised fully and too often the interactive board is used for no more than displaying the lesson objectives.
- Learners' occupational experience is stimulated through an appropriate range of visits to exhibitions, success at national competitions in nail art and the mandatory requirement to complete placements in salons and spas.
- Arrangements to support learners with additional academic or personal needs are good. Recruitment, induction and personal reviews identify effectively those learners who are falling behind, not attending or experiencing personal challenges. Occupational and guidance staff provide a consolidated team approach in giving additional vocational, personal, financial and career support. Learners have a high regard for the degree of support they receive and its beneficial effect on their learning.

- All learners use an electronic assessment portfolio which informs them effectively of their achievements and what assessments have not been completed. Tutors conscientiously make learners aware of the assessment units that can be integrated into practical work and the majority of learners are familiar with the structure of their awards. Tutors provide appropriate feedback on marked assignments, and check grammar and spelling systematically.
- Initial assessments to establish learners' literacy and numeracy levels are thorough, as are assessments to ascertain learners' preferred method of learning. Learners generally make good progress in improving their English and mathematics skills.
- Although completed, the results of occupational-skills tests and information around previous salon experience are not used sufficiently to inform initial learning plans. For those learners in need of additional support, staff and learners have set targets that help learners to manage the process of learning effectively as well as learning outcomes. Few other learners include personal development targets in their electronic learning plans.
- A high level of respect and team ethos exists within the department. Learners are proud of their programmes and work collaboratively within and between groups. Learners exhibit good professional interpersonal skills that reflect the diverse industry they will work in. Barbering learners were asked to consider the similarities and differences in marketing products to male clients and they explored how those not used to working in the barbering industry would familiarise themselves with clients' concerns and queries.

Performing arts and media studies

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Outstanding

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Nearly all learners on performing arts and media courses complete their courses successfully. These results are mirrored in the high quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Learners' progress onto higher education is exceptionally high. Performances and design work attract outstanding press reviews and have received high commendation from theatrical agencies and design studios.
- Inspirational and skilful staff are successful designers, performers and writers and this helps learners to develop as holistic artists in their own right. Individuals benefit from working with higher-education learners. Good levels of mutual respect exist between staff and learners. Teachers have high expectations of learners who in turn have high expectations of themselves. Learners feel secure in taking risks and participate in sessions with confidence. Motivation and positive thinking form part of the tutorial programme.
- Stimulating and energising teaching promotes independent learning. Most lessons are planned well and a range of imaginative tasks help learners to develop skills rapidly. Theory is taught creatively and is linked to practice with topics which advance learners' critical skills. Professional practice permeates all programmes.
- Exceptional industry-standard resources enhance learning and include dance studios, a purpose-built theatre, editing suites, rehearsal rooms and darkroom facilities. The college's impressive exhibition space attracts famous artists and recently featured the work of Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst, as well as showcasing the work of learners, local schools and community groups. High quality work adorns public places. However, some studios would benefit from additional displays to exemplify key technical language and act as aide-memoires for learners.
- Sparkling enrichment activities invigorate courses. Recent events include a visit to Blue Print recording studios working alongside Elbow, a vibrant workshop with Belgium's Kopergietry contemporary dance group, and entry to innovative international competitions. Graphics learners recently won the prestigious 'ten percent of the world supports Manchester United' competition.

Strong links with industry include the Pineapple Dance Studio and the BBC, for whom the college hosted *The Voice* singing auditions.

- Learners are also able to access a plethora of skills master classes in performing arts and dance, photography, media and music to further develop their skills. Moreover, an impressive range of practitioners provide insightful glimpses of employment in the creative industries through the college’s bespoke visiting speaker programme.
- Exciting assignment briefs develop learners’ English and mathematics skills: film studies learners carefully calculated *Batman’s* box office returns compared to costs of production; creative media learners critiqued and contrasted the performance skills of Lady Gaga and Lana Del Rey; and music learners costed gigs for prestigious music festivals. Most work is marked meticulously with grammar and spelling corrected.
- Assessment for learners with specific learning needs is well organised and appropriate support is organised promptly. Individual learning plans for all learners contain specific and challenging targets. Structured, well-organised personal tutorials ensure that plans are reviewed and progress is monitored regularly. Learners understand how to improve their work as a result of frequent, detailed and accurate feedback from staff, both face to face and using social media.
- Equality and diversity are celebrated well through lessons and through schemes of work and assignments. Optimum opportunities for learners to develop their understanding of issues are created. For example, learners on performing-arts courses researched the dearth of black ballerinas in the industry; media and communication learners investigated fragrances and feminism; photography learners researched racism and Rastafarianism; and media learners studied bullying and body image in Blackpool working in partnership with schools.

<p>Foundation English</p> <p>16-19 study programmes</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p> <p>Employability</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- As a result of good teaching, learning and assessment, the majority of learners achieve their qualifications. In most classes, they make at least the progress expected of them and many are working above the standard expected.
- The majority of teachers use a good range of skills and methods. They encourage team and paired working that promotes communication, so improving speaking and listening skills. When teaching learners on vocational courses, they introduce materials and activities that relate to their training, for example, students learning to be motor mechanics learn to write letters to suppliers and customers. In an adult literacy class, the teacher split sentences into their component parts and then pinned them to a ‘washing line’. Learners were challenged to work out permutations of accurate English by reworking the sentences and to experiment with the effect of different punctuation. In a minority of lessons too much time is spent listening to the teacher and learners’ attention drifts.
- Learners benefit from effective initial assessment to establish their starting points, ensure they are placed in the correct class and have appropriate targets. Good attention is paid to their individual goals and aspirations for progression. In a few classes learners complete the same work regardless of their abilities.
- Teachers provide regular and helpful feedback that tells learners what they are doing well and how they can improve. When using question and answer as part of assessment, teachers give learners time to think and reflect. Follow up questions extend their ideas and their learning. In a few cases, teachers are too quick to move on or provide the answers themselves.
- Marking of written work is thorough, prompting learners to give attention to their common errors or letting them know when that topic will be covered in class. In a number of cases

teachers' comments include arrangements to meet learners for extra individual sessions to discuss the marked work.

- Progress monitoring is good. Learners and teachers use an electronic tracker system to record progress, submit work and set targets. Learners like the independence and control this gives them. In an evening class, one learner was working from home and logging into the college system to get assignment materials and upload work to the system.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Staff encourage learners to be aspirational. As a result learners understand the benefits of improving their life chances by achieving their English qualifications. Learners with additional needs explained how they felt valued and supported so that they could now study well and complete their education, having missed much at school.
- Diverse groups of learners work well together and value each other's contributions. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers. One learner spoke movingly about being able to restart his life and ambitions because of the way the college includes him.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The Principal and senior managers promote high aspirations and expectations very successfully for all learners and are relentless in their drive to improve the quality of all aspects of the college's provision. They position the college successfully at the heart of the local community to ensure it makes a significant impact on improving the lives of local people and on regenerating the local economy. Managers and staff at all levels in the college ensure that every aspect of the college's work contributes fully to ensuring that learners succeed.
- Governance is outstanding. Governors are particularly effective in ensuring that the college is led and managed well. The college benefits from the governors' wide range of skills and experience in education and business. Governors know the college well. They receive regular and appropriately detailed reports on the college's performance, and this enables them to support and challenge the leadership team successfully. Governors are involved very actively in the life of the college. For example, the chair listens to discussions at student forums and quarterly, wider management events when the college's strategy is debated. Governors undertake a wide range of relevant training that enhances their ability to undertake their role successfully.
- The new Principal has taken decisive and swift action to make improvements in the very small number of underperforming curriculum areas. This is already beginning to have an impact; for example, it has led to improved curriculum management and enhanced morale and motivation of staff teaching hairdressing and beauty.
- The management of the performance of teachers is very effective and leads to improvements in outcomes for learners. The college uses information about its performance very successfully to set and review progress towards targets for teachers. Staff benefit from a wide range of professional development opportunities that enable them to achieve their performance targets and extend their skills and experience. A team of mentors provide very effective support to teaching staff who are new to their role. They encourage them successfully to innovate and try out new approaches in their teaching.
- Managers evaluate the quality of provision accurately and comprehensively. They identify successfully college activity that is below the high standard that they expect and take action quickly to improve it. All managers, staff and governors are involved actively in self-assessment and contribute fully to ensuring that improvements are made continuously to all aspects of the college's activity. The college listens carefully to the views of learners, parents and employers, who speak very positively about the college. The evaluation of the quality of the majority of lessons is specific and accurate, and enables teachers to make improvements to their teaching,

learning and assessment. However, a minority of observation reports are not sufficiently clear or detailed and, as a result, do not lead to rapid improvements.

- The college's partnership work is excellent and makes a significant contribution to learners' experience and success. The college works extensively and very successfully with a wide range of employers and agencies to identify current and future local skills needs. Managers plan courses that meet local needs and enable learners to gain skills and knowledge to progress into local employment. For example, the college works very closely with employers working in the visitor economy, in aeronautics and in construction to identify what employers need and prepare learners successfully for jobs in these areas.
- The college has excellent links with local schools and the pupil referral unit. It plans and delivers provision that supports and extends the learning of learners aged from 14 to 16 and prepares them effectively for progression on to further vocational education. A bridging course for learners from a range of referring agencies and high schools is particularly effective in enabling disaffected young people to gain the confidence and motivation to join college courses. A very high proportion of these learners are successful and progress into employment and to further study.
- Managers and staff promote equality and celebrate diversity very actively, and ensure that respect and tolerance for others is at the centre of the college's culture and strategy. This ethos is promoted through a wide range of college activities and events, including an annual equality and diversity festival. Managers take action successfully to recruit learners to curriculum areas where they are under-represented. The college identified that female learners were performing less well than male learners and has taken action successfully to ensure that appropriate support is in place for female learners who now perform as well as their male peers.
- Arrangements for ensuring learners are safe are comprehensive and effective. The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. All staff who deal directly with learners are trained in recognising and knowing when and how to refer potential safeguarding incidents. The college liaises closely with a wide range of agencies including police, social services and the local authority to ensure a coordinated approach to identifying and responding to the needs of learners who are at risk. Effective strategies have been put in place to meet the wider basic needs of learners, including the introduction of a popular breakfast club.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**Blackpool and the Fylde 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	16-19 study programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1	1	2	1
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1	2	2	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	1	1	1	1	2	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1	1	1	2	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	1
Early years and playwork	1
Engineering	1
Motor Vehicle	1
Building and construction	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	3
Performing arts	1
Media and communication	1
Foundation English	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	Full-time: 3,599							
	Part-time: 5,875							
Principal/CEO	Ms Bev Robinson							
Date of previous inspection	November 2007							
Website address	www.blackpool.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+
Full-time	466	111	809	405	1,392	395	0	0
Part-time	12	647	60	525	32	63	1	12
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	140	308	37	396	2	43		
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	37 (bridging programme)							
Part-time	348							
Number of community learners	600							
Number of employability learners	724							
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"> ■ None 							

Contextual information

Blackpool and The Fylde College is a large general further-education college providing further and higher education learning opportunities. It operates from four main campuses, three learning centres and around 30 community learning venues along a 17 mile stretch of the Fylde coastline. It offers learning opportunities in 14 of the 15 subject sector areas. In 2012/13 the college supported over 20,000 learners, of whom over 9,000 were further-education students, including 3,000 aged 16 to 18 and 2,400 workplace learners and apprentices. Blackpool is an area of high economic and social deprivation. The attainment of school leavers in Blackpool is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Sue Harrison HMI

Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Quality and Standards as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners, parents and carers 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 provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

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

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

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

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