

Preston's College

General further education college

Inspection dates		11–15 November 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Learners make good progress in developing personal, social and work-related skills, particularly through the use of semi-commercial, learner-led enterprises.
- The college responds very well to the needs of employers and the local community, for example programmes designed to help learners re-enter the job market have excellent outcomes.
- Good teaching and learning lead to above average success rates on the majority of courses.
- Innovative use of information and learning technology (ILT) helps learners to consolidate and continue their learning both within and outside the classroom.
- Very good, well-coordinated care, guidance and support help learners to stay on programmes and succeed well.
- College leaders have successfully pursued an ambitious strategy to become an enterprising college providing high quality provision that reflects and responds to the needs of the whole community it serves.
- Strong leadership, effective management of change and rigorous performance management have resulted in significant improvements in the quality of provision and accountability of staff.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- In a few areas of the college, notably the AS-level provision, success rates are too low on some courses.
- Too few learners gain higher-level grades.
- Improvements in attendance and punctuality are not yet consistent across all courses.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that success rates improve rapidly on the minority of courses where they are below the national average, including some of the AS-level and GCSE provision.
- Increase the proportion of high grades by ensuring lessons and work set provide sufficient challenge for learners with high levels of ability.
- Staff and managers should take swift action with the minority of learners whose attendance is poor or who turn up late for lessons.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Learners make good progress in developing personal and work-related skills. They communicate effectively, work well together in teams and present their ideas clearly. During the enterprise day that took place during inspection, learners produced ideas for college events to be held later in the term. Hospitality and catering learners made goods and designed packaging for sale at a Christmas event and construction learners made stalls to display the goods.
- The standard of learners' work is generally good and some is outstanding. Learners on performance arts courses display a level of skill that is often above that required by the course. Excellent links with the industry in this, and other, curriculum areas, allow learners to showcase their skills and work on real life project briefs, such as designing sets for a local theatre company.
- Visits in this country and abroad help learners to broaden their knowledge and understanding and practise skills they have developed. Performing arts learners visit Broadway, hospitality and catering learners carried out project work in Poland and spent three weeks working at the Olympics.
- Success rates are on an upward trend and overall success rates are above the national average. The overwhelming majority of learners are adults on part-time courses, where success rates are generally high. Success rates for full-time learners are at the national average overall. On a minority of courses, success rates are too low. This includes some of the college's AS-level provision. The number of learners achieving high grades is also too low. Attendance is satisfactory overall and improving, but attendance and punctuality are still not good enough on a few courses.
- Apprentices develop good personal, social, trade and employability skills that improve their chances of securing progression in their job roles. They enjoy learning the theory and apply it well in practical skills to produce high standards of work. Employers value the professionalism that the learners bring to their businesses thus improving their competitiveness and profile with their customers.
- The achievement of qualifications in workplace learning is very high and has continuously improved in the past three years. These learners, most of whom are in construction, gain confidence, progress rapidly and achieve their qualifications in the planned time. Learners in other trades make equally good progress.
- Success rates for apprentices are in line with the national averages. In previous years apprentices in a few curriculum areas did not complete their qualifications due to non-completion of functional skills of English and mathematics or loss of employment. Most of the current apprentices stay on their programmes and make good progress to develop high-level skills in English and mathematics with the full support of their employers.

- The college has successfully narrowed the gap between the achievement of different groups of learners in recent years, for example between male and female learners and those from different ethnic groups. A few gaps remain. For example, success rates are lower than the overall cohort for the small number of apprentices of Indian heritage. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The college is very successful at engaging young people not in education or training, and unemployed adults. The outcomes from these programmes are excellent; many of these learners go on to further education or into jobs. School pupils who attend college as part of their curriculum achieve outstanding results, with high levels of retention on programmes and high success rates for those who take a qualification.
- The majority of learners make good progress in developing their English and mathematical skills. Success rates on functional skills literacy and numeracy courses are well above the national average. For the smaller number of learners who take GCSE examinations in these subjects, success rates are too low. Students on courses for learners who speak English as an additional language make very good progress.
- Progression rates to further and higher education or employment are good. Many learners progress from entry-level qualifications to intermediate and advanced work. The college recognises that it needs to extend the range of universities where learners gain places.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Learners benefit from teaching, learning and assessment that are good. These contribute significantly to the improvement in learners' achievements in subject areas and work-based learning. Teachers have high expectations of their learners and provide good quality support, in and out of the classroom, to help them make good progress.
- The relentless promotion and development of enterprise across all subject areas enables learners to develop their entrepreneurial and employability skills. From enterprise awareness days to learner-operated semi-commercial services, such as Vincent's butchery, enterprise skills are closely linked to all aspects of the curriculum.
- In practical lessons, teachers use their industrial experience to enable learners to gain good vocational skills and techniques that meet current industry practices. Learners benefit from professional working environments such as commercial hairdressing and beauty salons and well-equipped kitchens to practise and develop their skills.
- Teachers across all areas including work-based learning are well qualified and have strong expertise in their subjects. Effective staff development to improve teaching, learning and assessment through a 'back to basics' approach has improved the range of teaching and learning techniques used by teachers to motivate and engage learners in their studies.
- The vast majority of teachers carefully plan lessons to ensure that learners engage in a range of activities that encourage them to think for themselves and develop good independent learning skills. As a result, learners are enthusiastic, enjoy their classes and make good progress. For example, in a construction lesson, learners developed good independent learning skills and made rapid progress as they planned and scaled house designs.
- Skilful teaching on courses for learners who speak English as an additional language ensures they make good progress. In one outstanding lesson, the teacher managed the learning particularly well to ensure learners from a wide range of backgrounds all participated in the lesson. She used information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively to increase learners' knowledge and consolidate their understanding.
- In the minority of lessons that are less effective, teachers do not sufficiently challenge learners, particularly those of high ability, to work at a more advanced level. Occasionally, teachers talk for long periods of the lesson without regularly checking learning or providing opportunities for learners to participate in discussion and activities to extend their learning.

- The majority of teachers and assessors make very good use of ILT to support learning. The virtual learning environment (VLE) contains useful interactive teaching and learning resources that effectively support learners’ progress. The use of tablet computers and smart phones enable learners to access materials and complete assessments outside of the classroom. For example, childcare students are able to complete real-time assessments through the uploading of video footage recording the completion of tasks.
- Assessment of learners’ work is good. Teachers generally provide detailed and accurate feedback to learners both in their written work and through verbal feedback. Learners and apprentices are clear about what they need to do to improve their work to meet minimum target grades. However, not all learners are challenged to achieve the high grades they are capable of.
- Assessment of the initial starting points and needs of learners at the beginning of their courses is thorough. Initial and diagnostic assessment of learners’ literacy and numeracy skills accurately identify additional learning support needs. Rapid referral to the learning support team results in learners accessing good quality in-class and additional learning support that helps them make good progress.
- Generally, assessors, during their regular visits to apprentices in the workplace, reinforce theoretical knowledge with good examples of practical work. However, they do not routinely challenge learners to think critically to illustrate the theory underpinning their practical work in order to extend their learning. Assessors use tablet computers well to demonstrate the newly introduced e-portfolios ensuring that learners systematically gather, record and store evidence to claim competence against their qualification.
- Care, guidance and support for all learners are very good. Learning mentors, coaches, retention officers and staff in ‘The Point’, which is part of the student services department, provide a range of support services that are effective in helping students remain at college and complete their courses successfully. Staff generally are effective at recording learners’ progress and setting and reviewing targets.
- Information, advice and guidance for apprentices are excellent. The college provides a rolling programme of pre-apprenticeships to promote apprenticeship programmes in the community. Learners gain skills in interview techniques and make effective use of the internet and social media to help them find jobs. A large number of learners have benefited from this invaluable service.
- English and mathematics skills are well-developed in functional skills sessions. However, these are not always reinforced in some curriculum areas. A significant minority of teachers do not routinely identify or correct errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. In work-based learning, the development of mathematics and English skills has improved and these are now well planned and effectively linked to lessons and in progress reviews.
- The college ethos and environment are inclusive and provide a positive learning environment in which all learners are welcomed. Equality and diversity are promoted in all aspects of college provision. Staff make very good use of opportunities to promote and develop learners’ awareness and understanding of equality and diversity. For example, in a travel and tourism lesson learners explored equality issues surrounding health tourism and access to the National Health Service.

<p>Health and social care and early years and playwork</p> <p>16-19 study programmes</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is reflected in the high success rates of adult learners who are returning to education. However, in 2012/13 a small minority of learners aged

16 to 18 on childcare programmes left their courses early. In the current year, retention is more positive due to a more thorough assessment process which includes a planned programme of taster days to help learners make an informed choice.

- In the majority of lessons, learners make good progress. This is because their teachers plan carefully and support learning through the use of a range of techniques including skilful questioning and the deployment of interactive and engaging resources. There is also very effective use of technology to support learning in college and off-site. Because of this, learners gain very good understanding of complex concepts such as the stages of child development. In a small minority of lessons, planning is less effective, resulting in slower progress for the learners.
- Good employability skills are developed through work experience where learners are closely monitored and supported to develop their practice. Learners gain valuable skills and experience in a diverse range of placements including residential respite centres, treatment centres for those with addiction issues and homeless shelters.
- All learners have a thorough initial assessment and the results are used effectively to make sure that they are enrolled on the right course. In addition, learners with additional needs are identified quickly and provided with effective and skilled support in class and also in their work placements. They value this and it helps them to achieve and progress to the next level. More-able learners are also clearly identified but there are fewer planned opportunities for them to extend their learning through activities such as individual research.
- High levels of support are offered to all learners, with robust systems in place to identify learners at risk of leaving their courses. Staff from across the college work seamlessly to ensure that the correct help is provided so that they stay on their courses and achieve. Learners value this and it supports their progress to more advanced courses within college and to higher education.
- Learners receive very clear, detailed written and verbal feedback, which helps them to improve their work and achieve higher grades. Additional assessments show them what they need to do to achieve on their vocational programmes of study. For example, in the first two weeks on programme, students on the Access to Higher Education Health course analysed a newspaper article and produced a short piece of writing. Teachers graded this and gave clear guidance which identified areas for improvement. This was then used by the learners to produce work of a higher standard for their first formal assessment.
- Learners achieve well in English and mathematics functional skills qualifications. Teachers from the vocational courses correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in written work but do not reinforce these aspects sufficiently in lessons.
- Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity and there are planned activities which develop this within many of their lessons. Learners show good understanding of the needs of different groups such as adults with learning disabilities and those from different cultural backgrounds and can apply these to their studies in other areas such as enterprise.

Science and mathematics and statistics

16-19 study programmes
19+ learner programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good which have led to improved outcomes for learners. Curriculum leaders, teachers and tutors have taken robust and successful actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Success rates were above the national average on almost all courses in 2012/13, with significant improvements recorded on AS-level subjects in particular.

- Teachers have high expectations of learners and set challenging targets. They are enthusiastic about their subjects which help motivate learners. Learners are attentive and work purposefully during lessons. A brisk pace maintains interest and helps learners make good progress in developing their theoretical knowledge and practical skills. For example, learners in a vocational applied science class carried out an acid base titration analysis with confidence.
- Although few learners take part in work experience placements, they develop good personal, social and employability skills through enterprise awareness activities. Visits, for example to universities and hospitals, and guest speakers broaden their horizons. Activities in the classroom help develop skills in teamwork and build learners' confidence.
- Teachers provide interesting, well-thought-out and enjoyable activities that enable learners to extend and deepen their knowledge, often inspiring their curiosity to think more widely about their subjects. Teachers make good use of learning technology such as tablet computers and smart phones during their lessons; they encourage learners to use college podcasts, the virtual learning environment and the internet for independent learning and research. For example, learners explored more advanced concepts about absorption and emission spectra in physics and the causes of cholera in biology.
- Learners work successfully in groups often giving presentations of their findings to their peers, enabling them to explore and express their understanding. For example, reporting their group's findings helped learners to understand factors that can affect pulse rates and, in another example, their understanding of mathematical expressions relating to circles. Teachers check learning during lessons in a variety of ways including effective use of questions, monitoring progress while learners are completing tasks and by reviewing feedback on tablet computers or small whiteboards.
- On a few occasions where learning is less effective, learners are all working on the same tasks throughout the lesson and teachers do not always provide work that is sufficiently challenging for the more able. In a few instances, the pace is too slow as learners spend too long on one topic or activity.
- Teachers effectively use information about learners' initial starting points to plan learning. The college provides good additional support for learners who need it. Teachers and tutors assiduously monitor learners' progress, attendance and punctuality using an electronic system. They put in place appropriate measures to support learners who may be at risk of failure or leaving their course early.
- Assessment is frequent and learners promptly receive detailed written feedback to help them improve and achieve their aims; often work is discussed in class. Teachers give their time freely to help learners outside lesson time.
- Teachers provide relevant and useful extra help with English and mathematics support where necessary. For example, curriculum managers arrange extra sessions in statistics for biologists and mathematics for chemists. Teachers are alert to the need to support learners' development of English skills. Learners show confidence in using specialist mathematical vocabulary such as factors and indices.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance to help them choose the right course and make decisions about their future. Full-time learners have the opportunity to swap courses during the induction period. Progression to higher education or employment from A-level and advanced vocational courses is good.
- Staff foster mutual respect and a harmonious environment among learners from diverse backgrounds; learners' behaviour is good. Equality issues such as respecting differences are explored through the college's tutorial programme. Some differences exist between success rates for different groups of learners, for example, adults are more successful than younger learners at gaining higher grades in GCSE mathematics.

Engineering and motor vehicle

16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Success rates improved significantly in 2012/13 because of the effective improvement strategies introduced by the new curriculum management. Success rates are now at or above the national averages. The proportion of learners who progress to the next level of learning and into employment is good.
- Teachers are passionate about raising learners' aspirations and have high expectations of their learners. The majority of teachers have recent industrial experience and use their expertise well to relate theory to practice. They devise industry standard tasks, which learners enjoy and value. Teachers motivate their learners well to ensure that they make good progress.
- Learners develop good vocational skills to allow them to increase their confidence, which assists their progression to employment. They work on tasks that reflect what takes place in industry. For example, motor vehicle learners work on customers' cars as part of the college's semi-commercial enterprise. The good links with employers and industrial visits further enhance learners' opportunity for employment.
- Learners develop good business awareness in an engineering context. In one lesson, during the college's enterprise awareness day, electrical engineering learners effectively designed and manufactured good model lighthouses using specialist computer software. They priced each electronic component needed and arrived at the final cost for the product. Learners intend to sell the high quality product to the community at the college's forthcoming Christmas market.
- Almost all teachers use learners' profiles and the results of their initial assessment effectively to plan their lessons and to identify the support needed for individual learners. Generally, teachers use directed questions to engage all learners and to check their understanding and aid progression. In a few theory lessons, tasks and activities are not sufficiently challenging for the more-able learners.
- The use of ILT to support learning is good. Learners frequently access specialist computer software to help them with their theory and practical work. Learners make good use of the information and resources that teachers provide on the virtual learning environment.
- Teachers provide good support to help learners develop independent study skills. Learners value the support they receive from their teachers and education support workers in lessons and tutorials. They appreciate the ease with which they can contact their teachers for advice.
- Teachers monitor learners' progress closely. They intervene quickly if learners are at risk of underachieving and develop appropriate action plans. Teachers work with learners to set a range of targets to promote good progress and to help them complete their assignments in time.
- Assessment of learners' work is timely and accurate. Learners are clear about assessment requirements and deadlines. The standard of learners' assignments, particularly at advanced level, is good. Teachers' written feedback is variable across the provision. Feedback on BTEC courses is more detailed and constructive, and enables learners to improve the quality of their work.
- The development of learners' mathematics skills is good. In one motor vehicle lesson, learners produced price lists for car components, added labour charges and value added tax, and issued invoices to customers. The development of learners' English skills requires improvement. Too many teachers do not correct learners' spelling and grammatical mistakes.
- Information, advice and guidance for learners are good. The good admission process ensures that learners are on the appropriate courses. Vocational teachers and cross-college staff use the assessment of learners' level of skills in English and mathematics well to identify those requiring additional support.

- Equality and diversity are understood well by teachers and learners. There is a great deal of evidence of mutual teacher/learner respect. Learners speak highly of the welcoming college environment and feel safe in the college. Learners are made aware of the issues relating to the global economy, and compare and discuss the productivity levels in the British manufacturing industry and that of other countries such as Germany and China.

ICT for practitioners and ICT for users	
16-19 study programmes 19+ Learning programmes	Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good which correlates with the high success rates for both short and long courses. High success rates have been sustained over a three-year period, showing a steady increase year-on-year. Over the same period, learner numbers have increased significantly, in part due to new course development in response to local labour market needs. Retention and punctuality are good, with learners progressing on to higher-level programmes, university and employment.
- Teaching and learning in lessons are generally well planned to challenge and motivate learners with stimulating activities and quizzes. In one lesson, learning technology was used interactively with graphics and video, to teach advanced photographic manipulation to a commercial standard, including an interactive quiz to check learners’ understanding. In another lesson, technology was used to good effect to generate mood sounds to support computer game scenarios. However, in some lessons the use of interactive learning technology is uninspiring and not used to enhance learners’ interest and understanding.
- Learners make effective use of a range of good learning material from home, using the college’s online facilities, to extend and enhance their studies. In class, teachers generally use skilful questioning techniques to engage and check on learners’ understanding. However, in a few question and answer sessions, the use of non-directed questioning allows some learners to dominate responses, leaving the teacher without a clear picture of the progress and understanding of the whole group.
- Learners develop good vocational and employability skills, with a strong focus on enterprise and commercial activity. They benefit from being taught by teachers with good industry experience who are highly motivated and have high expectations for their learners. Learners experience a good range of industry standard computer equipment and applications. They are instructed in all relevant aspects of health and safety and the training they receive ensures they work safely and are able to identify possible risks and hazards.
- Initial advice and guidance are good, with all learners undertaking a diagnostic test to determine their support needs. Good pre-course information is provided for full-time learners, together with interviews to ensure learners are placed on the right course. Teachers give freely of their time and understand the individual needs of their learners. Where the need is identified, effective additional support is provided in the classroom by learning support assistants, providing a valuable additional resource for the teacher.
- English and mathematics are effectively developed through discrete functional skills sessions, together with coursework submissions. Learners demonstrate competence with basic mathematical calculations. Written work is submitted online and correct spelling is prioritised. However, errors in grammar and punctuation are not always highlighted or corrected. Assessments are well organised, timely and thorough, and marked work is returned promptly with written comments and verbal feedback to encourage improvement.
- Tutorials provide good pastoral support and are themed to encourage learners to understand a range of life skill topics. The tracking of learners’ progress is good and recorded online, with

appropriate individual targets set to help ensure learners achieve their full potential. Individual targets agreed with learners are reviewed at regular points throughout the year to ensure they make good progress.

- Learners are respectful in class and in social areas around the college and they work well together in group and paired activities, sharing ideas and helping each other.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which reflect the increasing numbers of learners who successfully complete their apprenticeship framework. Staff and employers work collaboratively in supporting and guiding learners to develop good occupational skills. The majority of learners ably meet expectations that they will exhibit a good professional image and high levels of client care.
- Experienced and knowledgeable tutors effectively promote a purposeful atmosphere that motivates learners as they complete client services. Learners develop good occupational skills through their tutors' consistent and relevant guidance. Learners on advanced hairdressing courses can describe fluently the tonal values that influence colour corrections. Those on intermediate beauty therapy courses effectively compare products and evaluate their benefit for particular skin types. The majority of learners work in professional salons that provide well-planned training that links well with the college programme.
- College-based practical teaching includes a varied range of activities that match the skill levels of learners. A separate, professional semi-commercial salon provides learners with good access to clients requiring more complex services. The combination of different programmes and levels of qualifications within the commercial salon provides learners with a wide range of experiences. However, some theoretical learning tasks are overly complex with insufficient direction given to learners to enable them to clearly identify the main purpose of the activity.
- The college's wide range of internally developed web-based learning packages is complemented by commercial software that covers all awarding body criteria. However, staff do not sufficiently promote this independent learning opportunity. Learners are over-reliant on tutors providing learning materials and emailing them any additional presentations rather than encouraging learners to access these resources independently.
- The college offers a wide range of visits and competitions that apprentices benefit from. Learners enjoy learning from guest speakers who share their expertise through discussions and demonstrations.
- The assessment process is thorough and accurate with learners actively involved in deciding their readiness for assessment. Well-phrased and probing questions provide prompts, stimulate reflection and challenge learners to link pre-learnt concepts to form a solution. Where assessments are not completed successfully, the assessor provides positive advice and guidance on how trainees can improve.
- Staff are becoming more conversant with the newly introduced electronic portfolio and review system. Although learners and work-based assessors are yet to make full use of the system, learners have effectively embraced particular aspects, such as uploading photographic evidence of services and submitting written evidence for assessment. Learners' written work is well presented, containing good detailed explanations of process and theoretical principles. The majority of assessor feedback provides learners with suitably detailed information on how to improve and better meet the assignment criteria. Spelling and grammar are consistently corrected.
- All learners complete initial assessments which translate into appropriate learning plans. Learners, together with employers and assessors, collaborate in choosing the optional units that

best match the services the salons provide. The review process effectively shares with the employer the learner's occupational progress but there is an over-reliance on the learner's own reflections of their progress in functional skills.

- The college diagnostically tests the English and mathematics skills of all learners prior to starting the programme. Good and appropriate support is swiftly provided for those learners needing additional help. Learners whose English and mathematics skills are particularly low attend a four-week summer intensive programme to improve their skills. Learners value the support they receive.
- Tutors, workplace assessors and employers work collectively to support learners in developing their interpersonal and occupational skills. One learner who was experiencing financial difficulty was effectively supported in order to stay on course. Learners who have suffered redundancy are redeployed within the commercial salon to ensure continuity of learning.
- The department is permeated by a culture of mutual respect, with an expectation that learners and staff work collaboratively. During lessons learners consider how they would adapt their approach or service to match a varied range of clients and their particular needs. For example, how they would adapt techniques when blow styling clients from different heritage groups and the professional approach needed for clients with particular disorders.

Teaching and lecturing and training to provide learning support 19+ Learning programmes

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers support and motivate trainees well by getting them to use their practical experience from the classroom, thus enlivening the sessions with real examples from their practice. As a result, trainees develop in confidence and make significant progress in lessons, which is reflected in the good and improving success rates.
- A range of opportunities is available to ensure trainees develop their skills across the whole curriculum, including working with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The standard of trainees' work is good. Attendance is good. Trainees benefit greatly by having the opportunity to work together to share good teaching practice and innovative ideas to try in the classroom.
- Teachers are well qualified and experienced and use this experience effectively to enthuse trainees in developing their teaching and support roles. Sessions are very well planned and lively and take good account of how different trainees learn. Teachers confidently use a wide range of activities and resources to engage trainees and help them make good progress.
- Trainees are interested and purposeful and respond well to further challenge particularly in helping them think critically about their teaching roles. Teachers model good practice and continually remind trainees how they might use activities with their own students. The majority of trainees confidently use on-line resources, particularly the discussion forum that provides good opportunities for them to learn from each other.
- Following some historic concerns about retention on the certificate in supporting teaching and learning in schools programme, all trainees now undergo an in-depth interview, more thorough initial assessment, and have to complete six months in the classroom before coming onto the programme. This ensures that they understand the commitment to, and requirements of, the course and identifies if they need additional help to succeed. Success rates have improved as a result. Teachers set challenging targets for each trainee and carefully monitor their progress.
- Trainees understand assessment tasks and find the feedback they receive useful and supportive. The standard of written work is good. Teachers use assessment effectively to encourage learners to make the progress expected of them. Teachers extend learning by using a wide

range of assessment techniques including observations, written assignments, reflective journals, and recorded professional discussions.

- Trainees get many useful opportunities to evaluate their own learning including identifying where they meet assessment criteria. This is particularly helpful in further developing their own assessment practice. Not all teachers pay enough attention to ensuring grammar and spelling are correct. Some trainees’ work is handwritten and difficult to read. Not all research is accurately referenced.
- Good opportunities are available for trainees to develop their English and mathematics through a range of tailored approaches, for example individual study coaching and additional teaching sessions. However, the reinforcement of these important skills is not always included in the main teaching sessions. Despite this, trainees are very aware of the importance of developing these skills and ensuring they fully incorporate them into their own work with students.
- Good advice and guidance benefit trainees in assisting them to plan effectively for their futures in teaching and education. A very flexible approach to delivering programmes means employed trainees and those in volunteering positions can attend either during the day or in the evening.
- A wide range of very relevant additional learning sessions is available via one-off workshops, for example on managing challenging behaviour and supporting learners with dyslexia and dyscalculia. Not only are these programmes available to trainees, they are also open to local employers and are very well attended. High numbers of trainees secure employment or progress onto further education and training.
- Trainees are respectful and demonstrate high levels of professionalism. Teachers encourage trainees to tackle sensitive subjects within their own teaching, for example topics around transgender. Trainees benefit greatly from the opportunity to work closely with pupils from a nearby special school, thus widening their experience in working with pupils with learning difficulties. Trainees are very aware of the importance of challenging discrimination within their own teaching sessions.

<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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- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers support and motivate learners well, resulting in good success rates for functional skills English. These results are at, or significantly above, national averages for all levels of qualification. Rates are equally as good for learners aged 16 to 18 years and adult learners. The latter includes a significant number of unemployed learners, placed by the Job Centre.
- Unemployed learners comment extremely positively about the gains that they make in confidence, friendships, and health and well-being because of the good teaching, learning and assessment they experience. These gains have led to some very good success stories with individuals obtaining employment and progressing to higher education. In 2012/13, a high proportion of learners studying foundation English progressed to more advanced level programmes.
- In contradiction to the good success rates for functional skills English at all levels, success rates for GCSE English are poor, with only 34% achieving higher grades in 2012/2013. Teaching and assessment on GCSE English programmes are good but the results are poor due to low attendance and lateness of a significant number of learners. This stops them achieving good results, as they miss important learning opportunities. To address this, changes have been made to the entry criteria and learners’ written work has been analysed to identify gaps in knowledge, with the results being used to provide more tailored teaching in the current year. The new IGCSE is being piloted as an alternative qualification but it is too early to measure the impact.

- Staff are well-qualified subject specialists and use their experience to deliver well-structured learning activities which are highly engaging, creative and use vocational and enterprise-based topics to develop and extend learners’ skills. Once skills are developed, teachers effectively use a wide range of learning activities to prepare learners to apply their English knowledge in more general contexts. In one session, learners were tasked with experiencing a sherbet sweet by using the five senses, to develop their descriptive language skills. In another session, a bestselling Christmas toy was the stimulus for a vibrant discussion about gender stereotyping, developing learners’ ability to persuade and influence.
- The majority of learners are enthusiastic and confident in contributing views and opinions during discussions. They make good progress in lessons when writing for a purpose, developing thinking skills and working collaboratively. Assessment is used effectively to identify skills gaps. Teachers keep learners well informed about their assessment outcomes and they receive good quality feedback that helps them to improve their work. Teachers regularly monitor learners’ progress towards predicted grades.
- Learners’ work is assessed well. Teachers use praise, constructive guidance and peer feedback frequently to support learning. Support staff are effectively deployed to reinforce learning. Learners receive good quality advice and guidance following assessment at a range of points throughout their programme to ensure success.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Staff use the results of initial assessment to ensure learners are following appropriate programmes. Learners receive timely advice within sessions around specific information to improve their work, develop respect for others and promote positive behaviour. Staff are highly adept at working with unemployed students. They use well-judged and imaginative teaching strategies and encourage participation through the use of gentle humour and plentiful praise. This is highly appreciated by the learners.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. Within sessions staff and students challenge stereotyping and behaviour from others that they deem to be disrespectful. Learners talk with conviction about the importance of tolerance of others and actively celebrate difference.

<p>Administration and business management</p> <p>16-19 study programmes</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and that leads to good outcomes for most learners, although not enough achieve the highest grades. The majority of learners are unemployed adults on short courses who achieve well. Progression to other courses and employment is high. In 2012/13, retention declined on a minority of courses; however, in-year college data show that retention is now high.
- Teachers use their expertise well to plan structured lessons which effectively build on learners’ knowledge and develop their ability to apply theory to practice. For example, in a lesson on fiscal policy, learners confidently explained the impact of a reduction in tax on consumers and the government.
- Teachers make good use of group activities and presentations to develop learners’ confidence, team working and communication skills. The college uses guest speakers and visits to add breadth and depth to learners’ experience and understanding. For example, Master in Business and Administration (MBA) students from Texas developed learners’ knowledge of business planning. Another session, by a television presenter, explored how to turn ideas into money.
- Learners benefit from running ‘Mooch’, the college’s fashion outlet, as a semi-commercial enterprise. They take the lead in undertaking market research, costing and purchasing stock and

promoting products. Learners evaluated the success of their business and identified that their market research was too narrow and that they could have used social networking to better effect to increase sales.

- Teachers know their learners well but do not always give the more able learners tasks that challenge their abilities sufficiently so that they achieve the higher grades. Teachers use questions effectively to probe learners' understanding of key concepts. However, in a minority of lessons the more confident learners dominate question and answer sessions because questions are not well directed.
- Teachers make good use of learning technologies to support learning. Learners enjoy the on-line quizzes which are used to check learning and they carry out on-line research to identify target markets based on key characteristics. Learners make extensive use of the college's virtual learning environment and find it valuable to help them catch up if they fall behind.
- Support for learners is very good and they value the additional support they receive from teachers, learning support staff, mentors and study coaches. Many learners progress from foundation level to higher education.
- Feedback on written work is detailed. It identifies what has been achieved and, in most cases, is clear about what learners need to do to improve. Teachers mark work accurately, identifying errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Staff increasingly use the new electronic monitoring system to record and monitor progress. Attendance and punctuality have improved but are still not good enough in a few lessons.
- Teachers prioritise the development of English skills. For example, many lessons start with a group competition, which involves learners using the lesson's key business word to list as many words as they can. Teachers plan activities which effectively develop learners' speaking, listening and presentation skills.
- Learners come from diverse backgrounds and they work well together, treating each other with respect. They feel confident in their ability to work effectively in a diverse range of work settings. In one lesson, the teacher took the opportunity to discuss the recent strike by fire officers. This led to a lively discussion of ageism in the workplace.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, college leaders have successfully pursued an ambitious strategy to become an enterprising college providing high quality provision that reflects and responds to the needs of employers and learners from the community it serves. The success of the restructuring of the college into a cohesive 'One College' culture is evident in the highly effective cross-college approach to improving the experience of learners. This is articulated well by staff, who now have a much improved pride in working for the college.
- Governance of the college has improved in recent months and is now effective. The ability of the board to monitor the work of the college effectively has been strengthened by recent appointments and training for governors. The quality of information received by members to assist their monitoring role is now good and enables them to provide effective challenge to senior leaders.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is more thorough and has led to an increase in the proportion of lessons that are good or better, although there are still some small pockets of less than good teaching. Robust performance management is strongly linked to the outcomes of the monitoring of teaching and learning and there are clear links with the capability procedure if the required improvements do not take place.
- The views of learners and employers are listened to well by managers and feedback given on actions made in response. Learners are very positive about the quality of their experience at the college.

- A strong culture of quality improvement permeates every part of the college and is very effective in bringing about improvements. Self-assessment is a continuous process clearly based on every aspect of a learner's experience and is complemented by course review meetings. Monthly monitoring reports on each curriculum area and cross-college functions are detailed and accurate in the assessment of strengths and areas for improvement. Although significant improvements are evident, the college recognises the need for further work on aspects of provision, including attendance and punctuality and the success rates of some programmes.
- Management of the curriculum areas is good with clear and effective oversight by cross-college managers. Improvements in the quality of data available to managers have strengthened their ability to monitor the courses they are responsible for, and the imminent launch of a detailed and responsive college data dashboard should further enhance the responsiveness at all levels. Work-based learning is now integrated and well managed in the curriculum areas. Management of subcontracted provision is good with effective systems in place to monitor the performance of the providers.
- The college has undertaken a major strategic review of its curriculum, and the new strategic plan sets out a clear, realistic vision for the college as an enterprising college. The work-related element of study programmes is better developed in some curriculum areas than others. All full-time learners take part in a series of enterprise days culminating in an assessment based on employability skills. Work with key strategic partners is effectively strengthening the emphasis on employability skills and supporting the development of employer-driven qualifications. Relationships with employers are much improved, particularly with those who train apprentices.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college rightly prides itself on its excellent record of enabling learners with very low educational achievement to progress from foundation-level programmes through to higher levels. The achievement of different groups of learners is closely monitored and has successfully narrowed gaps in success rates; for example, success rates for Bangladeshi learners improved significantly in 2012/13. Staff are skilful at promoting a culture of respect and tolerance for others within the college and many use opportunities within the curriculum to deepen learners' understanding of equality and diversity.
- The college has extensive and thorough measures in place to promote the safeguarding of learners, including effective links with external agencies, and fulfils all its statutory obligations. Information about learners that may affect their safety, well-being or progress is appropriately shared to ensure the best possible support for them.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Preston 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	2	1	2	2	2	1
Outcomes for learners	2	1	2	2	2	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	1	2	2	2	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	1	2	2	2	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Early years and playwork	2
Science	2
Mathematics and statistics	2
Engineering	2
Motor Vehicle	2
ICT for practitioners	2
ICT for users	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2

Teaching and lecturing	2
Training to provide learning support	2
Foundation English	2
Administration	2
Business management	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: 2505								
	Part-time: 13,368								
Principal/CEO	Dr L Smith								
Date of previous inspection	June 2011								
Website address	www.preston.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	373	14	261	119	1001	183	19	2	
Part-time	132	1378	139	1134	136	136	6	129	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
	156	409	56	342	0		29		
Number of learners aged 14-16									
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	168								
Number of community learners	244								
Number of employability learners	357								
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"> ■ Lancashire Fire Authority ■ Preston Vocational Centre 								

Contextual information

The college serves the local community of Preston, with some workplace delivery on a national scale. It offers provision in a wide range of subject areas. Around a quarter of the learners at Preston's College are from the most deprived areas of the town. The proportion of the local population who have no qualifications is lower than that found nationally. The number of pupils at age 16 gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Sue Harrison HMI

Five of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the Vice-Principal 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 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 offered by the college. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

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

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

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

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