

Burton and South Derbyshire College

General further education college

Inspection dates	1–4 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the range of the college's provision, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Leaders and managers do not use self-assessment sufficiently well to identify aspects of teaching, learning and assessment that require improvement; in their action plans they do not include sufficient detail on how improvements will be achieved or how success will be measured.
- Too few learners achieve their qualifications, and too much variation exists in learners' achievements across different subjects and qualifications.
- The strategy to improve the quality of the teaching of English and mathematics has not improved the numbers of learners who achieve A*–C grades at GCSE or the success rates on functional skills qualifications.

The provider has the following strengths

- Through close links with employers and local and multinational organisations, managers and teachers enrich the curriculum for learners, resulting in a wide range of work experience opportunities, work on 'live' briefs and industry-standard learning resources, which help to develop many of the skills that employers value.
- Apprenticeship and high-needs provision are of good quality.
- Learners' behaviour is exemplary, and the learning environment on all college sites and in the workplace is respectful and inclusive.
- Leaders' successful recruitment of a more diverse learner population has resulted in an increase in the proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Burton and South Derbyshire College is a medium-sized, general further education college primarily serving East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire. The college sits within three local enterprise partnership (LEP) areas: Greater Birmingham and Solihull; Stoke and Staffordshire; and Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The catchment is a mix of urban and rural areas. Four wards local to the college are classed as having high levels of deprivation. The college has two main campuses: a town-centre site and a dedicated construction training facility in Swadlincote.
- Around 5,000 learners study at the college; of these approximately 1,800 are full-time learners aged 16 to 18, 2,200 are adult learners, mainly on part-time courses, and 970 are apprentices. About 800 learners aged 16 to 19 joined the college without a GCSE at grade C or above in English and mathematics. Unemployment in East Staffordshire is lower than the West Midlands average and slightly above the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- To improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, leaders should:
 - ensure that governors hold leaders and managers to account for the rapid improvement of teaching, learning and assessment
 - require managers to make better use of college tracking and monitoring systems to monitor learners' progress closely, so that they can tackle underperformance swiftly
 - ensure that teachers monitor learners' progress in lessons and over time
 - require teachers to use information about learners' starting points and current progress to plan teaching and learning that meet the individual needs of all learners, particularly the most able
 - ensure that teachers improve target-setting, so that learning targets focus on improving learners' skills and their personal development needs
 - improve the quality of teachers' feedback on written work, so that learners understand what they need to do to improve and how to make better progress
 - raise the quality of teaching standards by identifying and sharing existing good practice, and developing further teachers' planning and assessment skills
 - ensure that sufficient learning resources exist in each subject, so that all learners are able to develop further their independent learning skills.
- To improve the quality of provision and outcomes for learners in English and mathematics, leaders should:
 - urgently review the arrangements for providing effective learning in English and mathematics
 - equip teachers with the skills to provide learners with good teaching and learning; monitor closely the performance of teaching staff; and take action quickly to improve performance where necessary
 - ensure that all teachers understand the importance of developing learners' literacy and numeracy skills, and ensure that they make plans to develop these employability skills on all courses
 - ensure that target-setting for learners includes the development of English and mathematics skills on all courses and not just in English and mathematics lessons; and monitor the progress of learners more rigorously, taking action where necessary to support those at risk of underachievement.
- To improve self-assessment, leaders should:
 - ensure that self-assessment draws on accurate information about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - effectively identify the teachers that need support to improve, and how that support will be provided, including clear measures of success; and monitor and evaluate the impact on learners' progress and achievements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers do not use self-assessment sufficiently well to identify the aspects of whole-class teaching, learning and assessment that require improvement, including in sub-contracted provision. Inspectors' and college managers' lesson observations identified weaknesses that were not identified in the self-assessment report. One of the areas for improvement at the previous inspection was the quality of teachers' planning to meet the different needs of individual learners in their lessons; inspectors found too many cases where this was still an area for improvement.
- Managers have put in place revised monitoring activities which draw on an appropriate range of evidence to make judgements about the quality of provision. However, managers are not yet using their findings well enough to enable the sharing of good practice, in particular to help staff assess how much learners have learned or to identify what specific activities will help individual learners make the best progress. Action plans linked to quality reviews are not specific enough to support teachers in improving their skills, or to enable teachers or managers to determine when actions have been successfully completed.
- Provision in mathematics and English does not ensure that all learners make good progress and achieve the qualification. The success rates in functional skills were an area for improvement at the previous inspection, and despite some improvements, achievement remains low.
- Learners with high needs make good progress towards achieving their personal learning aims and qualifications, and in developing their independence. Teachers use a good range of enterprise activities to provide learners in discrete high-needs provision with preliminary work-experience opportunities. However, too few of the small, separate cohort of these learners, or those who are integrated into study programmes, have an internship or work placement.
- Collaboration with employers is exemplary. Senior leaders work closely with a very large number of employers and organisations, ranging from local community groups to prestigious multinational companies to support curriculum planning, to meet effectively the priorities of the three LEPs they work with, and to introduce learners to diverse cultures around the world.
- Financial management is good. Leaders are able to invest in new programmes and learning facilities and resources as a result. At the same time as reducing spending over the past five years, leaders have ensured that the college has the capacity to continue to develop its curriculum in line with changing skills needs.
- Leaders and managers regularly and very effectively analyse future employment prospects to support the ambitious vision of a curriculum that provides the skills required by employers over the next 20 years. They have high expectations that learners develop behaviour and attitudes that will meet employers' needs. Staff in the central advice centre provide detailed, well-informed and impartial advice and guidance that ensure that learners develop ambitious and achievable plans for their next steps. On vocational study programmes, learners successfully complete additional units or qualifications that strongly enhance their prospects of employment at the end of their programmes. The proportion of learners progressing to employment or further or higher education is high. Most learners who apply to university secure a place.
- Leaders and managers have been successful in recruiting a more diverse population of learners since the previous inspection, when diversity was an area for improvement. They have increased the proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds to levels well above those in the region. They use links with voluntary sector and community organisations particularly well to raise learners' awareness of the contribution made by members of minority groups to British culture throughout history. Regular college publicity celebrates the achievements of the diverse range of learners.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Governors know the college well and use their diverse skills and experience to set its strategic direction. They have worked closely with the senior leadership team to establish the strong focus on meeting employers' needs locally, regionally and nationally.
 - They share the commitment of the staff that learners should develop the attitudes and work-orientated behaviour that are required by employers if they are to take advantage of economic growth in the region.
 - One governor challenged a group of learners to register on the electoral roll for the first time because of the poor turnout of young voters in a recent election. As a result, a substantial number of learners registered to vote for the first time.

- Although governors know the challenges facing the college to ensure learners develop their mathematical and English skills, they have not sufficiently held leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all subjects to improve achievement.

■ **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**

- Managers revised staff development this year to include training for all staff, including those working for sub-contractors, in the Prevent duty to counter radicalisation and extremism; governors also undertook this training. Policies have been revised to take account of Prevent and include an appropriate procedure to ensure that learners are safe when external speakers are invited onto the college premises.
- The multi-faith room is equally welcoming to learners of all faiths and denominations, or those simply seeking a place for reflection.
- Recruitment checks are rigorous and comply with requirements. Designated staff use links with relevant external agencies well in dealing with child protection cases. Their records of incidents, including allegations of bullying or harassment, are detailed and reported to governors.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teachers know their learners well. They have produced informative profiles of learners which include their prior attainment levels and their preferred approach to learning. While teachers use this information well to offer learners support and guidance, too few teachers use it effectively to plan learning sessions that meet individual needs. Too much teaching requires all learners to work at the same pace, especially in sessions for adults. Consequently, the most-able learners are often not consistently challenged to extend their knowledge or to achieve high grades.
- Learners receive good pastoral support. They know their course targets and are motivated to achieve them. Many learners regularly track their progress electronically with the help of learner mentor staff, and they attend additional revision and assignment sessions because they are keen to succeed. However, not all revision sessions are individualised to address specific gaps in learners' knowledge and skills, thus limiting improvement.
- Too often, learners' short-term improvement targets are based solely on what they need to do to complete their learning programmes. Other than for high-needs learners, teachers do not set targets that focus sufficiently on helping learners develop the skills they need in order to improve, extend or deepen their learning. Teachers do not routinely set improvement targets in English and mathematics, and the monitoring of learners' progress in these subjects is inconsistent. Consequently, learners do not always make progress above the minimum expected on the basis of their prior attainment.
- Staff identify learners' additional support needs promptly and make appropriate support rapidly available. The college has close links with local schools, which inform arrangements for specialist support and enable learners, including those with high needs, to make a smooth transition to college life. In-class support is improving and is now good because of ever-closer collaboration between additional support staff and teachers. However, teachers do not always develop teaching strategies to make the best use of the expertise of additional learning support staff.
- Staff are well qualified and undertake significant continuing professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning. While teachers are increasingly aware of the importance of assisting learners to make progress in their learning, they do not all check or measure learning regularly in lessons. Too many teachers do not target their questions effectively to check whether learners understand or need additional help or consolidation in order to progress.
- The college has improved the induction for new learners on study programmes this year to encourage them to become more independent in their studies, and to prepare them for higher level study or employment. This work on independent learning is at an early stage of development and many learners still rely too heavily on the teacher to direct their studies. The amount and quality of resources for self-study available to learners in the college's virtual learning environment vary too much between subjects. As a result, learners' independent learning skills are underdeveloped.
- Teachers' feedback on marked work is too variable. Teachers provide detailed and informative feedback in some curriculum areas, such as construction, and on courses such as access to higher education and information technology at level 3. Where teachers offer constructive and effective feedback, learners know how to improve; however, where they provide superficial feedback, learners are not clear about their strengths or how to improve. Not all teachers correct spelling and punctuation and thus do not reinforce employability standards.

- The college is an inclusive environment which champions diversity well. Staff promote equality and awareness of diversity effectively through the tutorial programme, college-wide activities and information displays, and when undertaking progress reviews with apprentices. In an A-level media lesson, learners challenged the gender stereotyped view of an abuser and a victim depicted in a national charity's poster campaign. In a pre-access lesson, learners considered the needs of the Traveller community when discussing barriers to healthcare. Not all teachers are confident to develop further naturally occurring opportunities to promote equality and diversity in lessons and on courses.
- The teaching of English and mathematics to adults and on study programmes is too variable in quality, and too much is inadequate. In many lessons, teachers do not plan in a sufficiently detailed way to enable all learners to make good progress; too many learners are not engaged in learning, and teachers often fail to check learning or to adjust their plans in response to learners' needs. Teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge for the most-able learners.
- Where the teaching of English and mathematics is more effective, teachers engage learners well with relevant learning materials that cater for the wide range of abilities. For example, in one mathematics lesson for healthcare professionals, learners valued the vocational relevance of the examples used by the teacher. Apprentices value their vocationally relevant functional skills learning sessions.
- Teachers do not integrate English and mathematics sufficiently across much of the curriculum, so that learners are less able to develop these skills in the context of their chosen subjects. Teachers do not consistently develop learners' skills or highlight achievements and areas for further development in English and mathematics. As a result, learners do not value these employability skills or make the expected progress. A minority of teachers spell words incorrectly on whiteboards in lessons, and not all teachers routinely correct spelling and grammatical mistakes on marked work, and so do not reinforce the importance of these skills.
- Most teachers have high expectations of their learners. Learners' behaviour is exemplary and they exhibit positive attitudes towards learning. The majority of lessons include a variety of tasks and activities which interest and motivate most learners. Teaching in practical subjects is engaging and vocationally relevant. Most learners enjoy their studies.
- Teachers keep parents well informed of their child's progress through regular reporting and parents' evenings. Increasingly, parents have access to live electronic progress information. Employers are well informed about the progress of their employees. Reporting on the progress of learners with high needs is detailed.
- Managers and individual teachers use their extensive links with employers effectively to enhance the curriculum and offer specialist opportunities for apprenticeships, making teaching and learning more relevant to learners' career aspirations. For example, learners in business studies enjoy their work on a 'live' project with a local sports club, where they assist in increasing its membership by improving its marketing practices. In the well-resourced construction academy, learners build benches for a local cricket club, as a result of a partnership with the English County Cricket Board.
- Many curriculum areas are very well resourced. A good range of real-work environments enables learners at all levels to practise their vocational skills while serving the public, such as those in catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Some local employers encourage learners to strive to achieve their potential; they sponsor prizes to individual learners who make exceptional progress. A local global car manufacturer has donated modern cars for learners to develop up-to-date skills in the motor vehicle workshop. A partnership with East Staffordshire Borough Council enables sports learners to develop their skills in a wide range of sports at the Shobnall Leisure Complex. Resources in creative arts reflect industry practice and learners' work is extensively and attractively displayed within the college.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

- Most learners are confident and self-assured. They enjoy their learning, demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and their behaviour in all learning settings is exemplary. This contributes to the good progress that the majority of learners are making on study programmes, apprenticeships and on programmes for learners with high needs. For example, learners on carpentry and joinery study programmes make good progress following constructive feedback from teachers. However, too many learners make insufficient progress in developing their English and mathematical skills.

- Full-time learners benefit from a broad range of enrichment activities that develop their personal and social skills, raise their aspirations and enhance their work-related skills well. For example, intermediate manufacturing and engineering apprentices develop good teamwork and project management skills on a week-long residential Outward Bound course designed to enhance their personal development. Learners on level 3 art courses work collaboratively with level 3 science learners to take photographs of science experiments, in preparation for entry into a national photography festival; they also work with music learners to create innovative sound-based art work. External guest speakers from a wide range of industries make formal presentations to many learners on topics such as global mobility at the annual 'Make Your Mark Expo'. As a result, learners gain a good understanding of the world of work and they are encouraged to focus on how to achieve their career aspirations and goals.
- Learners benefit from the newly introduced 'Skills Promise', where teaching and support staff and the Students' Union collaborate well with local organisations and employers to develop the skills that learners need in order to gain and sustain employment. For example, learners receive effective support from staff in the new 'employment hub' to prepare for work experience, for employment and for progression to their next step; they use specialist software to help them research and find up-to-date information on a wide range of careers and jobs.
- The standard of learners' practical work is good. For example, engineering apprentices, working with a global car manufacturer, develop their skills to a high industry standard; and construction learners quickly gain the skills to prepare mortar mix and carry out trowel work, laying bricks and blocks to a good standard in bricklaying workshops. However, the standard and presentation of learners' written work across a minority of vocational and academic programmes are not high enough.
- On study programmes, the large majority of learners benefit from good-quality external work experience with a wide range of local, national and multinational employers. As a consequence of this, learners gain valuable, relevant industry experience and develop high levels of confidence and teamwork skills. Not enough external work experience and internships for the small cohort of learners with high needs have been available.
- Learners behave well throughout the college and in the workplace. They are safe at college and at work; they demonstrate a good understanding of issues such as internet safety and bullying. Learners know how to report their concerns if they do not feel safe or if they have concerns for others.
- Most learners with additional learning needs are supported well; this enables them to develop skills for independent living and to progress to higher level studies. However, the achievement rates of these learners do not yet match those of their peers.
- Learners have a good understanding of British values and the risks of extremism and radicalisation. They speak confidently about tolerance and respect for others during group tutorials and in lessons; during the inspection, learners demonstrated these qualities in learning sessions and in communal areas of the college.
- Learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities in college, at work and in the community, and work well in collaboration with others. They benefit from a wide range of tutorial workshops that deepen their knowledge on topics such as sexual exploitation, mental health and hate crime. These sessions help to prepare learners well for life in modern Britain.
- The large majority of learners use the good information, advice and guidance provided by dedicated staff very well to plan their next steps towards their career aspirations. Most learners progress to higher levels of study or into employment. Staff work closely to support those learners at risk of dropping out of learning. In-year college data indicate that this work is having a positive impact, as fewer learners have left their programmes this year compared with the same time last year.
- Most learners are punctual and are well prepared for learning. Attendance is good in most vocational lessons, but is too low in A-level, mathematics and English lessons and on a minority of adult learning programmes. Staff manage attendance carefully, and in-year college data suggest an improvement in attendance rates.

Outcomes for learners

require improvement

- On classroom-based learning programmes, the large majority of learners achieve at a rate just below that of similar groups nationally. Too few learners complete their courses, and the proportion of learners who are successful in achieving their qualifications varies too much between different subjects and different types of qualification. Success rates are high on most courses in engineering, science and mathematics and on certificate qualifications. However, they are low on business and administration courses and on diploma and award qualifications.

- Learners on the 16 to 19 study programmes account for just under a third of the college's provision. They achieve their qualifications at a rate just above that of other providers. The majority make good progress in vocational subjects. However, too few learners make the expected progress in A-levels and in English and mathematics. Learners on the BTEC art and design course at level 3 develop good skills when painting with oils and BTEC level 3 travel and tourism learners exhibit high levels of professionalism, which prepares them well for work. However, too many younger learners do not achieve their A-level and BTEC level 3 qualifications in line with their potential.
- Too few younger learners aged 16 to 18 improve their English and mathematical skills quickly enough; and too many of the large numbers of learners taking GCSE courses in English and mathematics fail to achieve grades A* to C. Learners' success rates on literacy and numeracy functional skills courses are low at level 2. While apprentices on discrete English and mathematics courses achieve well, other adult and younger learners do not develop sufficiently their English and mathematical skills in discrete classes or on their main programme.
- Overall apprenticeship success rates have declined over the past three years. Too few apprentices successfully completed the framework within the planned timescale as a result of ineffective planning of the teaching of functional skills. Success rates for younger apprentices declined last year and success rates for apprentices aged over 24 are low. In particular, timely success rates for the large number of apprentices in engineering are low, partly owing to the temporary suspension of production at a local manufacturer; as a result, apprentices were unable to complete in the planned timescale. However, success rates for business and administration apprentices are well above those of other providers. Current apprentices are making good or better progress towards achieving their full qualification.
- Managers have not yet been effective in reducing the differences in achievement between groups of learners. For example, learners with a learning difficulty or disability, looked after young people, those leaving care and young carers are less likely to achieve their qualifications than their peers. Young male learners outperform their female counterparts and adult female learners outperform adult male learners. Small cohorts of adult learners, such as learners from a White British background and those from a Black Caribbean background, do not achieve at the same rate as their peers from other backgrounds.
- Around two thirds of learners are adults. They achieve their qualifications at the same rate as learners aged 16 to 18, but at a lower rate than that achieved by adults in other, similar providers. Success rates are low for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, where most learners are adults. However, current ESOL learners make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills.
- The majority of adult learners on vocational programmes acquire the practical skills they need for work. Overall success rates are high on sub-contracted community courses; community learners make good progress on welding and fashion courses. However, adult learners on employability courses do not develop a wide enough range of skills; as a result, they are not sufficiently prepared for work in careers such as childcare. Success rates are low on courses that prepare learners for higher education. However, as a result of effective coaching and feedback from teachers on learners' work, most current learners successfully acquire the skills they need to study at a higher level.
- Learners' standards of practical work are good in hairdressing, beauty therapy, science, welding and joinery, often exceeding industry requirements. Intermediate and advanced apprentice engineers develop technical skills above the expected standard, particularly when working on parts for vehicles. Learners on access to higher education courses in psychology gain a deep understanding of the subject matter. However, too many A-level learners do not sufficiently develop their independent learning and research skills.
- The college works hard to identify and analyse the destinations of learners on completion of their courses. They employ an external organisation to contact learners six months after they have left the college. It has reliable data for over half of the cohort; a high number of the learners that responded moved into full- or part-time employment, further learning or apprenticeships. A high proportion of learners whose intended destination is higher education are successful in gaining places. Learners with high needs progress to positive destinations, such as further and higher education.
- The majority of the small number of learners in receipt of high-needs funding achieve their qualification aims and make good progress towards sufficiently challenging learning goals. They gain useful skills and make good progress in becoming more independent in their everyday lives. For example, learners on the BTEC art and design course at level 1 work above the expected level. They use artists' materials and tools safely and blend pencils and chalk together well to create three-dimensional drawings.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- The college provides study programmes for around 2,300 learners across a range of subject areas. The largest subject areas are arts, media and publishing, health and public services and care.
- Managers have successfully implemented the principles of the 16 to 19 provision. However, too often the quality of teaching in English and mathematics classes is inadequate; and as a result, too many learners make insufficient progress from their starting points, in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Too few teachers plan to develop further learners' English and mathematical skills in all lessons; and where this planning does occur, too often it does not result in learning activities that enable learners to improve their skills.
- Learners develop strong employability skills which aid their transition to further employment, training and education. For example, during a week-long college-based 'Make Your Mark Expo', many learners meet industry professionals from across a range of subject areas and listen to guest speakers talking about up-to-date topics relevant to their careers. This helps them to prepare better for future employment opportunities. Information technology (IT) diploma learners at level 3 obtain invaluable work experience working alongside IT managers at a hospice in Wolverhampton, and beauty therapy learners at level 3 benefit from external work experience and the testing of their practical and professional skills at a prestigious health spa.
- Teachers do not always plan learning well enough to meet the individual needs of learners. Too much theory teaching lacks pace and teachers do not challenge learners sufficiently. As a result, learners do not always make the expected levels of progress. This slow progress is particularly evident for learners in A-levels and English and mathematics, and is reflected in the college's success rates and proportions of high grades.
- Most learners are punctual to lessons and are well prepared for their learning. While attendance is high in most vocational lessons, it is too low in mathematics, English and A-level lessons.
- Most teachers have high expectations for the behaviour and conduct of their learners. As a result, learners' behaviour and conduct across all college sites are exemplary. Learners make good progress on vocational programmes and on the preparation for work and the work experience elements of their study programme.
- The majority of teachers set aspirational achievement targets for learners. However, teachers do not monitor learners' progress towards achieving their targets consistently or rigorously enough. Targets are too often not sufficiently detailed, which means that learners are not always aware of what they need to do to achieve all the components of the study programme, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Professional working relationships between learners and teaching staff are effective. Learners are positive about their learning experience and feel well supported at the college. Learners feel safe and adopt safe working practices, including the wearing of suitable personal protective equipment, as a result of teachers' appropriate management of the learning environment. For example, in a level 1 art and design class, learners undertook wood-block cutting safely and with minimum supervision.
- In practical vocational lessons, teachers provide clear and constructive feedback that provides learners with helpful information regarding what they have done well, and how they can improve specific aspects of their practical work. In many practical workshop-based lessons, learners make good or better progress in developing their occupational skills. For example, in carpentry and joinery, level 1 learners are already completing practical wood-jointing activities to industry standards and level 3 computer programming learners work independently to develop high levels of design skills using photo-editing software.

Adult learning programmes

require improvement

- Around 3,500 adults study at the college or on community sites on part-time and full-time vocational programmes, access to higher education courses, GCSE and functional skills in English and mathematics courses, and ESOL, family learning and short employability programmes.
- Attendance is low on a minority of adult learning programmes.
- In group sessions, teachers do not plan teaching and learning sufficiently well. Too often, learners all work at the same pace and level, on the same activities, using the same learning resources. Teachers do not consistently ensure that the most-able learners have enough opportunities to increase their rate of progress, to deepen their knowledge and understanding sufficiently or to make the progress that they are capable of making; and less-able learners do not have enough opportunities to consolidate their learning. As a result, learners are not all making good progress towards meeting or exceeding the standards expected.

- Teaching and learning in English and mathematics are not of a consistently high standard. In addition, the development of learners' writing skills across all adult programmes, particularly of their spelling and punctuation, is insufficient, with too many basic errors still in learners' written work. Teachers do not give sufficient attention to accurate writing; a small minority of teachers make too many spelling mistakes in their own writing on whiteboards and on learners' work.
- Teachers do not check learning in lessons effectively enough. They rely too much on questioning learners, allowing a minority of learners to dominate answers while leaving too many other learners out altogether. As a result, teachers cannot evaluate what individual learning is taking place, in order to inform the effective planning of future learning.
- Teachers' use of target-setting for learners and their overall monitoring of learners' progress are effective in a large majority of vocational programmes, but require improvement in some.
- Through highly effective links with partners in the region, and a well-thought-out strategy for adult learning, managers are able to provide programmes carefully designed to meet the needs of local employers and the community well. For example, short, community-based courses in welding contribute effectively to the upskilling of unemployed adults, and support their successful progression into work.
- Adult learners display very positive attitudes to their learning; they work with focus and determination and demonstrate high levels of respect for their peers and teachers. They value highly the wide-ranging vocational knowledge and experience of their teachers, who use these to good effect in making learning interesting and relevant. For example, on childcare programmes, teachers skilfully relate the learning to practical considerations of working in a wide range of childcare settings.
- Learners benefit from good individual coaching and feedback. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons to reinforce learning well. However, learners do not make enough use of the college's virtual learning environment to extend their independent learning outside taught lessons, and as a result, not all learners increase further their knowledge and learning. Additional learning support enables learners with identified support needs to participate fully in learning and to work towards becoming more independent.
- On access programmes, teachers carefully mark learners' assessed work and provide helpful feedback.
- Information, advice and guidance have improved significantly for current learners and are now good. Access learners receive effective support and guidance for their planned progression into higher education.
- Learners feel safe while learning at the college. They are aware of how to report any concerns and pay good attention to health and safety in practical lessons. Learners have a good understanding in relation to the prevention of radicalisation and of British values.

Apprenticeships

are good

- The college has 558 apprentices in eight subject areas, with the largest groups in engineering, construction, business administration and hairdressing. Managers have worked closely with a wide range of employers to develop programmes that are relevant and up to date. Apprentices develop many new skills as a result of well-coordinated training. Recent changes in the planning and management of the provision have resulted in current apprentices making good or better progress; for example, staff now teach functional skills at the beginning of the programme, which allows sufficient time for learners to achieve these skills. In another example, assessors have improved the monitoring of apprentices' progress so that more timely remedial action can be implemented where necessary.
- Most apprentices make good progress in the development of their technical and vocational skills as a result of effective workplace training. Apprentices' skills reflect industry standards and meet business needs well. For example, apprentices working in a global car manufacturer develop their engineering skills to a high standard; and hairdressing apprentices use one-to-one coaching methods to develop good cutting and colouring techniques, which they use well on clients in a commercial salon.
- Apprentices benefit from very strong links with an array of local, national and international companies, which help to advance their career opportunities. Effective communication and collaborative working between employers, assessors and apprentices mean that apprentices follow bespoke pathways that are tailored to meet their future career aspirations and to meet employers' needs. As a result, apprentices make a valuable contribution to their employers' business. Most apprentices progress to sustained employment or higher level training on completion of their programmes.
- Apprentices are prepared well for full-time employment. For example, they work with industry-standard equipment and know how to work safely; they feel safe in their working environments and they work competently on their own and in small teams. Many employers provide apprentices with additional responsibilities that enhance their skills development well. For example, apprentices in bricklaying, engineering and carpentry are entered in national and international skills shows and have won awards.

- Most assessors integrate English and mathematical skills well into vocational lessons. For example, apprentices confidently work out the volume of small water cylinders in plumbing lessons, and electrician apprentices calculate the thickness of electricity cables using the correct mathematical formula.
- Apprentices enjoy their work and most take part in lessons enthusiastically. Well-qualified and experienced assessors have high expectations of apprentices; they plan practical workshops effectively, using a wide range of learning activities that help motivate most apprentices.
- Most assessors link theory with practical activities well, which helps apprentices to apply their off-the-job learning to learning in the workplace. For example, during one assessment, an apprentice correctly applied the commercial practice of one estate agency when sending and receiving emails. As a result, the apprentice accurately met the assessment criteria and demonstrated highly effective skills. However, not all assessors plan or set sufficiently challenging tasks, particularly for the most-able apprentices, who do not always acquire or practise new skills and knowledge quickly enough. As a consequence of this, the most-able apprentices are not always challenged sufficiently to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The standard of apprentices' practical work is high. However, a minority of assessors do not routinely correct spelling and grammatical mistakes on apprentices' written work or provide them with strategies to identify and correct these errors themselves; as a result, they fail to reinforce professional standards of accurate writing. Assessors do not consistently provide written feedback on assessed work with sufficient detail to help apprentices make better progress or to improve the quality of their work.
- Initial advice and guidance are effective. All apprentices are interviewed by subject-specialist assessors and employers, who consequently ensure that apprentices are placed on the correct programme level and subject. Apprentices receive effective and timely review visits by assessors, who carefully monitor their progress in the workplace. However, assessors often set learning targets after progress reviews that are too vague. Targets are not always sufficiently challenging and do not clearly state what apprentices need to do to make more rapid progress, or extend their knowledge beyond the national expectations of the programme.

Provision for learners with high needs is good

- The college has 26 learners with high needs, of whom 11 are on discrete programmes based in Andrew Phillips House on the main college site, while 15 are on a range of mainstream courses across the college.
- Managers have high expectations of learners and use the allocated additional funding effectively to provide individualised learning programmes, so that learners develop their personal, social and communication skills well.
- Initial assessment of learners' skills and needs is good; staff use information from parents, carers, previous schools and health professionals to manage the transition from school to college effectively.
- All learners have a comprehensive learning development assessment or an educational, health and care plan, which identifies strategies to enable learners to participate more fully and become more independent where appropriate. Support staff use this information well to develop ways to support learners inside and outside classes on mainstream programmes. However, teachers do not use these methods consistently when planning teaching and learning to support and develop learners' skills as much as possible.
- Partnerships with local schools are good; the college runs open days and taster visits to prepare learners effectively for their entry into college from school or other providers.
- Learners make good progress over time. Teachers and support staff provide instructive feedback, both oral and written, to help learners improve their skills. Learners receive effective guidance on their next steps and the great majority move on to courses at the next level and to mainstream programmes. Currently, learners have progressed to courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 across the college and last year, one learner successfully gained a place on a photography foundation degree course which he started in September.
- Teachers and support staff in the discrete provision plan lessons that motivate and engage learners and provide a challenge at all levels. Learners develop their communication and teamwork skills, build confidence and improve their independent living skills well. One learner who at the start of his course rarely spoke or made eye contact is now speaking in full sentences and beginning to face people when communicating. Another learner is now using a fork for the first time and is continuing with these new skills at home. Parents are delighted with the progress made.
- Learners on the discrete provision work on a range of enterprise projects to provide preliminary work-experience opportunities. Learners enjoy producing, promoting and selling craft gifts from a stall at Andrew Phillips House. Learners on discrete and mainstream programmes engage in the wide range of college-wide enrichment activities and develop further their personal skills and skills for life and work.

- Teachers embed English and mathematical skills successfully into practical activities linked to the world of work. Learners are supported well by qualified and experienced staff.
- Managers have good links with local companies and voluntary organisations. Learners raise funds for a variety of local charities and good causes through their enterprise sales. However, the internship programme and the opportunity for all learners to engage in external work experience are underdeveloped; the college acknowledges that further development is needed.
- Learners on the discrete programmes have individual learning plans which incorporate effectively personal and social targets with key learning targets. The electronic individual learning plans for high-needs learners on mainstream programmes have clear targets linked to qualification requirements, but do not adequately identify the personal and social targets of the individual learners.
- Attendance is good and the college monitors absences well. Learners feel safe in college and are confident in the staff if they feel at risk.

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	6,665
Principal and Chief Executive	Dawn Ward CBE
Website address	www.bsdc.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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	147	550	705	1,038	955	388	26	240
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	260	95	91	111	351	207		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14–16	5							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA) Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main sub-contractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Skills Network ■ Momentum Training ■ Burton Albion Community Trust ■ Central College Nottingham ■ GB Training. 							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Denise Olander, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Gadfield	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anne Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Kathleen Tyler	Ofsted Inspector
Katherine Ireland	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Ofsted Inspector

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

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