

Beaumont College

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates

4–6 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for learners	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Good, sensitive leadership of the college encourages high standards, innovation and a very strong personalised approach to meeting the needs of students.
- The reorganised curriculum meets the needs of individual students very effectively. As a result, students make very good progress from their starting points and develop essential skills that prepare them for adult life.
- The wide range of sport, leisure and cultural activities offered improves students' health, well-being and understanding of the world in which they live.
- Students who are able to benefit from work experience develop good employability skills and make a valuable contribution to the business or organisation where they work.
- Students are highly motivated and keen to develop new skills. They are enthusiastic about life at college and contribute well to college life and their communities.
- Training and development for staff is practical, innovative and quick to respond to the needs of individuals and groups of students.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- In a minority of sessions, the planning of learning for most-able students does not take account of their abilities and needs. As a result, learning is not sufficiently challenging or stimulating for them.
- The self-assessment and quality improvement planning arrangements are not fully effective in improving performance and raising standards. Relevant staff and students do not contribute sufficiently to evaluating the quality of the provision.
- Observations of teaching, learning and assessment do not thoroughly evaluate the impact of teaching on students' progress and the standards they achieve.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Beaumont College is a residential independent specialist college owned and managed by the national charity Scope. It provides education and training for young people with physical or sensory disabilities and/or learning difficulties. The majority of students are from the north-west of England. The main college site is in Lancaster. The three satellite sites located in Carlisle, Blackpool and Barrow-in-Furness are recent developments and were established in response to local authority requirements for local non-residential provision.
- Following the college restructure in July 2015, senior leaders revised the curriculum to meet the needs of young people with complex support needs or health conditions and those with autistic spectrum disorders.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of the activities for observing teaching, learning and assessment so that the emphasis is on the progress made by students, the skills they develop and the standards they achieve.
- Improve the value of the self-assessment and quality assurance arrangements by:
 - Concentrating on the impact of the work of the college in improving the lives of students, broadening their experiences and preparing them for adult life
 - Involving all relevant staff in the self-assessment and quality improvement process so that they understand their role in improving the overall provision
 - Encouraging students, parents and other stakeholders to play a greater role in evaluating the provision
 - Making better use of available data to form judgements about the current position of the college, set measurable improvement targets and monitor the progress made in improving the provision.
- Ensure that most-able students benefit from challenging and stimulating learning activities and that learning support is well managed and appropriate to their individual needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The recent restructure of the college provision has resulted in a more sustainable and viable college. Strong and decisive action by the parent charity and governors has given senior leaders and managers greater flexibility and responsiveness to meet the increasingly complex and diverse needs of students.
- Throughout the restructuring and its implementation, the leadership team maintained a relentless focus on the needs of students and improving their life chances when they leave college.
- The range of provision is good. The reorganisation of the learning programmes for students into curriculum pathways provides a good structure for learning to take place. All the curriculum pathway leaders are relatively new to management positions and have benefited from good practical support and guidance from senior leaders.
- Senior managers responded positively to changes in the funding of students and the commissioning of places for students by local authorities. The development of provision in Carlisle, Blackpool and Barrow-in-Furness means that students for whom residential provision is not appropriate, or who prefer to attend further education close to where they live, can benefit from the expertise of Beaumont College.
- Training and development for all staff are comprehensive, well planned and responsive to the needs of students. Senior leaders devise very good and effective training using information collected about the individual needs of students before they start at college and in their first few weeks on their learning pathways. For example, relevant staff received training to understand which activities are most effective in helping students overcome learning and behavioural difficulties resulting from a sensory perception difficulty. Families and organisations responsible for students benefit from the high-quality training and support provided in areas such as difficulties with eating and drinking, and the moving and handling of students.
- The arrangements for observing teaching and learning are thorough, detailed, generally evaluative and reflect the activities observed. However, observers place little emphasis on the progress made by students in sessions and over time, the skills they acquire and the standards they achieve.
- A reflective practice forum provides valuable opportunities to share good and effective practice in the day-to-day management of learning. New staff in particular benefit from the opportunities to discuss strategies to work with more challenging students.
- The self-assessment arrangements do not accurately reflect the work of the college. Too many strengths are the standards of practice expected for students with high needs, and do not clearly identify the impact of the work of the college on different groups of students. The current self-assessment process does not highlight important areas for improvement that would further enhance students' experiences and help them make even greater progress. The wider staff group, students and other stakeholders had little formal involvement in evaluating the effectiveness of the college provision.
- The current quality improvement plan is overly complex. Senior leaders and managers do not make good use of the data collected to identify the current position and set realistic measurable targets that will further improve the college experience for students. However, the management information system designed by the college is very good. It provides comprehensive details of students' starting points, the progress they make and their level of achievement.

The governance of the provider

- The governors and principal have a strong and clear vision for the future of the college. The chair of governors uses her commitment and successful business experiences to achieve high standards for all and to support and challenge the college leadership team. Recently appointed governors use their wide range of skills and expertise to strengthen the existing board's ability to scrutinise the work of the college.
- Individual governors work closely with their link manager providing strong support, guidance and challenge.
- The previous inspection report in 2009 referred to the need to redevelop the main campus to overcome the structural problems that cause some students difficulties. The 2012 focused monitoring visit reported that the redevelopment had not proceeded because of funding restrictions. At the time of the inspection, no major building work had taken place although governors and senior leaders are still committed to improving the residential and learning environment. Improvements such as the student-operated lift have improved access around the college site.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Safeguarding is fundamental to all activities throughout the college. All students are very clear about what to do, and whom to talk to, if they have any concerns about themselves or others close to them. Where a student may not be able to communicate their concerns, staff are rigorous in their monitoring of students for any unexplained changes in behaviour, mood or health.
- The recording of incidents and concerns is meticulous. Senior staff monitor the records and ensure that actions are completed and, where appropriate, the college uses lessons learned from incidents or concerns to increase the effectiveness of safeguarding. Individual risk assessments are thorough, reviewed regularly and clearly relate to the needs of the student.
- The arrangements to keep students safe when using social media and the internet are good. Assessments of students when they start college establish their level of competence and capacity to understand the risks associated with using the internet. An appropriate range of educational and monitoring activities takes place throughout students' time at college to keep them safe.
- The college strategy to ensure that students are protected from radicalisation and extremism is appropriate and proportionate.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers, support staff, technicians and therapists provide stimulating and meaningful learning activities that help every student make progress towards their individual learning targets. Good planning identifies specific activities, learning, support strategies, and expected progress and achievements for every individual. As a result, students learn how to manage their anxiety, communicate, explore and enjoy a wide range of experiences.
- Students learn valuable vocational and independence skills that help them to have more control over their lives and integrate into their home communities. They become more confident and better able to make choices and express preferences. In a minority of classroom-based life and vocational preparation pathway sessions, staff do not challenge students sufficiently to aim high. In those sessions, the use of learning support staff is underdeveloped. Teachers do not direct them well enough to ensure that every student makes progress and reaches their potential.
- Students are confident communicators who use a wide range of strategies to ensure that their voices are heard. Students use signing, symbols, communicators, expression and body language effectively to communicate.
- Students know too how to manage and regulate their behaviour. They make good progress in learning how to present themselves appropriately in different settings, and how to reduce the effects of anxieties that impede their ability to participate in everyday life.
- Assessment is very successful in identifying starting points for every student and in tracking and recording the progress they make during their courses. Students successfully make progress in developing their English and mathematics skills, and useful and practical skills needed for work and volunteering.
- Assessments before, and when, students start at college ensure that relevant support such as speech therapy, behaviour management, personal care and technical assistance is planned effectively.
- Students benefit from opportunities to develop special interests and employability skills. In one case, an accomplished pianist uses the work placement in a local residential home to develop skills as an entertainments officer, learning to organise activities, listen to clients' preferences and prepare performances.
- The use of practical activities in teaching is effective in helping students to practise skills they learn in English and mathematics in realistic settings, for example in cooking, producing films and songs, and when making artwork. Practical sessions across the curriculum are particularly effective in helping students learn how to manage their behaviour, communicate successfully, work with others, make choices and express themselves.
- Support for learning is very effective. Teachers and support workers collaborate with the wider multidisciplinary team to ensure students' successful achievement of their goals. Following their assessments, students are provided with specialist equipment that helps them to speak, listen, discuss and express themselves freely and spontaneously, some for the first time. They are able now to use these skills in the community, in classes, during leisure activities and in their home environment.
- Students are an important part of their wider communities in Lancaster, Blackpool, Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness. They use local facilities and take opportunities to integrate with local people.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral and cultural development is effective. The majority of education staff take care to incorporate activities that help students explore difference and celebrate

diversity. Students learn to value difference and they are influential in helping local people, businesses and organisations to value diversity.

- Teaching to extend students' English and mathematics skills carefully incorporates work towards individual targets within all activities. For example, concepts of time, place and quantity are skilfully developed through art, dance and music.
- In a minority of sessions, the teaching of English does not meet students' individual needs well enough; they all work on the same topic at the same pace and in the same way for too much of the time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

- Students receive outstanding personal support from the highly skilled and experienced therapy and behaviour management teams. Staff provide invaluable support and guidance to students and their families before moving into college, while in college and when students leave.
- Students benefit significantly from a very wide range of enrichment activities and sports that develop independent thinking, encourage decision making and significantly broaden students' life experiences. Education, residential and therapeutic staff give considerable thought to planning activities that improve overall health, posture, core strength and diet very well.
- Most of the students at the Carlisle, Blackpool and Barrow-in-Furness centres take part in very good and well-organised work experience placements that link very well with their interests and work aspirations, and make a significant contribution to the development of their wider social, personal and employability skills including English and mathematics. Where appropriate, students at the main campus also benefit from suitable work experience.
- Work placements offer excellent opportunities for students to develop. They provide a positive image of disability to employers and employees, and make a good contribution to the wider community. For example, pupils at a school hosting students on work placements have learned to value differences and understand that skills and abilities come in many different forms.
- The highly personalised range of subjects and activities offered supports students' communication skills development exceptionally well. The integration of appropriate English and mathematics skills means that students can use these skills very effectively in their everyday lives. The high level of commitment and involvement of all staff, including administration and facilities staff, results in detailed learning, communication and behaviour guidance plans having a very strong impact on the personal development of every student.
- Students develop excellent communication skills using a wide range of adaptations to equipment and aids including photographs, pictures, signing, symbols, communication aids and technology such as using eye movements to control computers. As a result, students who, before attending the college, had very little interaction with the wider world are now making choices, expressing opinions and contributing to discussions. Where appropriate, students achieve functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and information and communication technology at entry levels 1, 2 and 3.
- The admissions team provides valuable and personalised information, advice and guidance to students and their families. The team works very effectively with other staff to liaise with education, health and social care agencies to coordinate support to produce education, health and care plans. Staff visit potential students in their education or care settings and homes to ensure that the college can meet their individual needs during their initial assessment visit to the campus and subsequently.
- As part of the process for students leaving college and moving on to their next stage, the transition team invites individuals and organisations to shadow staff and students during their final year so they have a clear understanding of their abilities and support needs. This collaboration contributes to students' very effective transition from college.
- Students feel safe in college and are confident to communicate with any member of staff if they have concerns. Students know how to keep safe in the workplace. Risk assessments are thorough and regularly reviewed to cover all aspects of the students' experiences.
- Students create their own innovative and highly effective personal portfolio record. This gives information about the activities and interests they enjoy, what they like to do when they are on their own and what makes them happy, to families and others who provide support. Families and others providing care and support can access the personal portfolio with the appropriate password and add additional information including after students have left college.
- Students enjoy learning. They are very proud of the work they produce and express their preferences very well. High-quality displays across the main college sites celebrate students' achievements.

- Students make good or very good progress compared with their starting points, as a result of highly structured and well-planned learning. Students' hopes for the future and their aspirations are central to the planning of each individual programme.
- Students with complex and significant barriers to learning make particularly good progress, overcoming anxieties about moving away from home, working in groups or with unfamiliar adults. The use of technology to assist students in controlling their immediate environment, communicating with others and expressing preferences is very good.
- All students improve their confidence levels and develop appropriate social skills. Students described having proper friends for the first time and being able to contribute to their college and wider communities.
- The recording of achievement is generally good. It demonstrates the progress students make and the intended outcomes they achieve. In a minority of cases, the recording of achievement is too descriptive and does not evaluate standards or work. For example, objectives noted as having been achieved in a work placement do not equate to the required standards expected for the tasks undertaken.
- The impact of the college experience on the lives of young people is very strong. Parents describe how it helps to develop students' maturity and improve their organisational and communication skills, and how much more pride the young person takes in their appearance. Students maintain friendships through social media or by video calls over the internet during holidays and after they leave college.
- In 2015, of the 27 students leaving college, 20 returned home, four progressed on to supported living and three to other residential provision. In 2015, one student progressed into voluntary employment. Overall, too few students progressed into paid, supported or voluntary work. To increase the progression of students into work, the college leaders are investigating the use of supported internships.
- Leaders and managers recognise the need to improve the recording of students' destinations when they leave college and the use of this information when planning the curriculum. They started to collect and use destination data for students who left in previous years and are improving the use of social media and events for former students to find out what these students have done since leaving college.

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent specialist college
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	103
Principal	Pam Murphy
Website address	www.beaumontcollege.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)								
		110	N/A	N/A	N/A	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+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ None 							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Nigel Evans, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Ofsted Inspector
Margaret Thompson	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the head of learning, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students 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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