

Lancaster & Morecambe College

General further education college

Inspection dates	17–20 May 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Attendance of learners to lessons is too low, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always challenge learners to make sufficiently rapid progress towards their target grades.
- Teachers do not develop learners' and apprentices' English and mathematic skills well enough.
- Teachers do not use information about what learners already know and can do to plan lessons.
- Managers' observation of teaching and learning is not sufficiently focused on the impact teaching has on improving learners' progress.
- Senior leaders do not evaluate the quality of provision rigorously enough, and governors do not always have sufficient information on learners' progress and achievement to challenge senior leaders effectively.
- Learners do not have a sufficient understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

The provider has the following strengths

- Effective learner support ensures that a greater proportion of current learners stay on their course and when they fall behind in their work they get the help they need to keep them on track to achieve.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the college has sound finances to sustain a good range of provision.
- Many learners from disadvantaged communities progress to employment or further education.
- Leaders and managers work well with a wide range of employers to align the curriculum to local job opportunities.
- Leaders and managers work well to provide an inclusive environment where staff focus strongly on developing the key college values of respect and tolerance of different cultures.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Lancaster & Morecambe College is a small further education college serving the communities around North Lancashire and South Cumbria but particularly the City of Lancaster and the seaside town of Morecambe. The college provides a wide range of post-16 education and training, including study programmes for 16- to 19-year-old learners, adult learning, apprenticeships, traineeships and provision for learners with high needs. Around a third of learners are aged 16 to 18 on full-time courses and the remaining two thirds are adult learners, mostly studying part-time courses. Currently, the college provides apprenticeships for 661 apprentices.
- Lancaster is a constituent settlement of the wider City of Lancaster, a local government district that has a population of 141,300. The unemployment rate is 5.2%, which is slightly below that for the North West. The main employment in the area is within service industries. The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training is lower than found nationally.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve learners' attendance to lessons, particularly in English and mathematics classes.
- Monitor learners' progress closely to ensure that they all make good or better progress in achieving their target grades. Further enhance the support provided for current learners who are at risk of not achieving.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - developing the skills of vocational teachers to ensure that they support learners to develop and apply their English and mathematics skills in their vocational work
 - ensuring that all teachers plan lessons that take into account what learners already know and can do and include activities that challenge the most able
 - ensuring that managers identify specific actions to enable teachers to improve their teaching practice and provide training and development to support these improvements
 - linking closely the findings from lesson observations to teachers' performance management.
- Improve learners' and apprentices' understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism so they are aware of how to keep themselves safe.
- Improve senior leaders' use of data to evaluate quality and use the analysis to provide governors with better information on learners' progress and achievement so that governors are able to challenge effectively the leadership of the college.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The college has gone through a period of significant disruption through the unanticipated promotion or retirement of key senior managers within a short period of time. Initially this had a negative impact on the effectiveness of college management and on learners' experiences and outcomes. The new senior leaders are taking swift action to return the college to its previously good position.
- Leaders clearly set out the college's ambitions and aspirations in the recently revised strategic plan. In-year improvements to retention and learners' progress indicate a reversal in the decline in achievement rates over the preceding two years.
- Managers have implemented a new process for the observation of teaching and learning based on ungraded peer observations. During joint observations, inspectors and college observers did not always agree in their respective findings. In too many sampled observation records, the judgements did not sufficiently focus on the impact of teaching on learning and learners' progress. The links between the outcomes from teachers' lesson observations and performance management lack clarity and are not sufficiently specific.
- Leaders and managers recognise that last year's self-assessment process did not result in a sufficiently accurate report. The document was too descriptive and some key judgements were overly optimistic. The quality improvement and self-assessment process has been completely redesigned and is now using evidence more effectively to improve. The management of underperforming subjects has been strengthened with a focus on engaging all relevant managers, teachers and support staff in the improvement process and this is having a positive impact in raising quality.
- The provision of English and mathematics has provided a key challenge for the college, with many learners entering the college with low prior achievement. Outcomes for learners were low in 2014/15. Leaders and managers have implemented a clear strategy to improve this provision; in-year data indicates improving outcomes but managers recognise that further improvement is needed.
- The college provides a welcoming environment for learners, with good-quality accommodation and resources. Leaders and managers set clear values for staff and learners. This leads to a strong ethos of mutual respect and learners' behaviour within the college is good.
- The principal has a strong understanding of the economic and demographic environment in which the college operates. Competition for learners aged 16 to 18 is fierce and the college is managing to maintain its share of the cohort. Collaboration and engagement with employers is good and is particularly effective on apprenticeship programmes. Adult provision takes place in a variety of community-based venues, including schools and children's centres, in order to engage with learners who would not otherwise come to the college. Fitting with its ethos, the college has a particular focus on meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged people in the local communities. Effective links with external partners such as special schools and the youth offender service support the college's achievement in serving the needs of its local area.
- Leaders, managers and staff successfully promote an inclusive environment and develop respectful and tolerant attitudes among learners. British values such as tolerance of different cultures, mutual respect and individual liberty are incorporated in the core college values. Managers are aware of any gaps in achievement between different groups of learners and have taken actions to reduce them.
- Curriculum managers monitor learners' progress but do not routinely aggregate this information at whole-college level to enable senior leaders to analyse the data systematically and in sufficient detail, although they were able to do so for inspectors during the inspection week. The progression and destinations of learners are routinely monitored and show a good overall picture.
- Leaders and governors monitor closely the financial position of the college, maintaining a prudent approach to the management of costs and improvement of college resources. Consequently, the college is in a strong financial position for the long-term sustainability of its provision.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Governors have a broad range of relevant experience and expertise. They are drawn from the local community, bring a clear external view and contribute well to developing the strategic plans and developments of the college.
 - Governors have a good oversight of the college's responsibilities for the safeguarding of learners, the 'Prevent' duty and health and safety; they receive and discuss reports on these aspects.
 - Aspects of governors' support and challenge to senior leaders require improvement. Governors do not receive all performance information in the detail necessary to enable them to identify and challenge in

a timely manner any decline in learners' progress and outcomes. Governors did not sufficiently challenge the overly optimistic picture provided by senior leaders in the most recent self-assessment report.

■ **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**

- The college has appropriate policies and processes in place, including those for bullying and harassment, to ensure that learners are safe. Managers respond quickly and effectively to any safeguarding concerns and involve external agencies when necessary. They keep accurate and detailed records of all concerns and actions taken. Arrangements to ensure the safe recruitment of staff are rigorous. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, which includes training in the 'Prevent' duty. Most staff have a clear understanding of how to keep learners safe; they are clear about identifying learners at risk, and about the reporting process. Links with local safeguarding boards ensure that the college incorporates local safeguarding intelligence. Effective risk assessments of work placements take place.

A wide range of activities are organised to promote learners' awareness of safeguarding issues, and to improve their understanding of how to stay safe. However, not all learners show sufficient understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Too much teaching and learning do not meet the needs of individual learners well enough. A significant minority of learners do not make the progress expected of them because teachers do not consistently ensure that lessons are effective and that good learning is taking place.
- Too many teachers do not ensure that all learners participate well in lesson activities and discussions. In a small minority of lessons, learners make slow progress because activities are not matched well enough to their previous levels of learning and understanding. In these lessons, many learners find activities to be either too easy or too hard and so they do not progress as well as they could.
- In a small minority of cases, teachers' expectations of what learners can achieve are too low. This results in lessons that do not challenge or enthuse learners to progress and achieve their full potential. For example, the most able learners complete tasks very quickly and then either have to wait for other learners to catch up or help those who are struggling to complete the task.
- Vocational teachers and assessors do not ensure that learners make sufficient progress in developing their skills in English and mathematics. Vocational teachers and assessors are inconsistent in how they integrate the development of learners' English and mathematics skills in their lessons. Consequently, too many learners do not make sufficient progress in English and mathematics to prepare them for their next steps in learning or employment.
- Teachers do not make consistently good use of initial assessment results to help them plan learners' individual learning objectives, particularly in GCSE mathematics. Learners spend too much time repeating mathematics topics that they already understand. However, by contrast, the teaching and learning of functional skills English and mathematics are good for learners on study programmes and for learners with high needs.
- The large majority of learners and apprentices develop good practical and vocational skills that help to prepare them well for employment. The vast majority of learners gain good work experience in well-coordinated work placements. The college has well-established links with many local employers who support learners and apprentices very well.
- The majority of learners have clear plans for their next steps in learning and employment. Specialist careers staff provide good advice and guidance so that learners are clear about their plans for progression. Learners value the help they receive in making these decisions.
- Most teachers are adept at incorporating material into their lessons that helps prepare learners to understand the cultural diversity they will encounter, both in the workplace and in their social lives.
- Staff provide good support for all learners and identify learners who need extra help at the start of, and during, their courses. In lessons, teachers often use learning support staff well to help individuals and groups. Learners value the very effective support and encouragement they receive from staff in the college's drop-in centre known as the 'Hex'. A wide range of effective support helps learners stay on their course, for example professional counselling for personal problems, advice about housing and debt and extra guidance on how to improve the way they write essays and assignments.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

require improvement

- Attendance of learners is low, particularly in English and mathematics lessons. Managers monitor levels of attendance closely and have taken actions to increase the proportion of learners who attend lessons. This includes closer monitoring and increased support for learners who are repeatedly absent. However, the actions that managers have taken have had insufficient impact on improving attendance. Low attendance limits the progress of too many learners, particularly those on 16 to 19 study programmes.
- Apprentices do not make sufficient progress in developing their skills in English and mathematics because vocational teachers and assessors do not plan sessions thoroughly enough to integrate these subjects into vocational topics.
- Learners do not have a thorough enough understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. The college provides a variety of activities to raise awareness of radicalisation and extremism, but despite this, learners have not developed a clear understanding of how they can identify these risks.
- The large majority of learners enjoy their time at college and make progress in improving their self-confidence and their personal, social and employability skills. Learners' behaviour is generally good and most have positive and mature attitudes to learning.
- On vocational courses, including apprenticeships, most teachers and assessors focus well on linking learning to employers' requirements as well as to qualification specifications. As a result learners develop good practical skills and a clear understanding of industry expectations in the workplace.
- Most learners participate in the good range of enrichment opportunities. These include sports clubs, outdoor pursuits, music, voluntary work and cultural visits. Learners say they feel safe at the college and have a good understanding about risks to their personal safety including bullying, grooming and other forms of abuse.
- Links with employers are good and many learners benefit from relevant work experience or work-related activities. Effective arrangements for careers advice and guidance ensure that learners are supported well to know the next steps they need to take towards achieving their career goals.
- The college is highly inclusive and learners with high needs integrate well into all aspects of college life. Learners understand and display the college's values of mutual respect and tolerance of different groups.

Outcomes for learners

require improvement

- The proportion of learners successfully achieving their programmes declined over the last two years and varied considerably between subjects, levels and ages. Managers have taken actions to reverse this decline. Consequently, in-year college data indicates that the proportion of learners retained on programmes and on target to achieve when compared to the same point last year.
- Progress for current learners on 16 to 19 study programmes indicates improvement, with an increase in the proportion of learners who achieve their qualification and high grades. A high proportion of learners, including those from disadvantaged communities, progress to further education or local jobs. A small proportion of the most able learners on 16 to 19 study programmes make insufficient progress given their starting point.
- Too few learners on 16 to 19 study programmes achieve a grade C or above in their GCSE English and mathematics. The achievement of functional skills is good and learners make good progress. Adult learners make good progress in developing their English and mathematics skills.
- Adult learners on access to higher education programmes acquire the academic and research skills they need to study at degree level and almost all of these learners progress to university. Learners on community learning programmes, many from disadvantaged communities, quickly improve their confidence to progress to courses that lead to qualifications. A high proportion progress into jobs.
- Success rates for intermediate apprentices increased during 2014/15, with most completing their apprenticeship in the planned time. Success rates for advanced apprentices aged 19 and over during the same period declined. Managers have identified reasons for this decline and have introduced actions to ensure that more apprentices achieve. Current apprentices make good progress and are on track to achieve their apprenticeship on time. Actions introduced by managers to reduce the achievement gap between male and female apprentices have been successful.
- Apprentices produce a high standard of work, which is valued by their employers.
- The majority of learners progress onto further education employment or training. Most apprentices progress into employment at the end of their programme.

- Learners with high needs make good progress and most achieve their targets and qualifications. They become more independent in their learning, and develop the skills that they need to increase their independence in their personal lives.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- The college delivers study programmes to approximately 1,470 learners on vocational courses, covering a good range of subjects from entry level to level 3.
- Too much teaching is planned and delivered to the average ability of learners in the lesson and does not take account of what they already know and can do. Teachers do not always provide sufficiently challenging learning activities, resulting in the most able learners not making the rapid progress towards achieving or exceeding their target grade. Learners with a wide range of abilities often complete the same task in lessons. When learners participate in activities that they find interesting and relevant they make good progress.
- Teachers do not always set specific or challenging targets to help learners improve their skills and knowledge and, as a result, some learners are working below their expected minimum target grade.
- The proportion of learners who achieve their learning goals in English and mathematics is too low. In many vocational lessons, learners receive insufficient support to improve their English and mathematics skills. Teaching and learning in functional skills English and mathematics lessons are good. A minority of learners, often as a consequence of personal circumstances, have low and erratic attendance. Consequently, these few learners are behind in completing their work and their current progress towards meeting their targets is slow. Teachers have put in place clear action and support plans with these learners to support them in achieving their qualifications.
- Learners develop technical and professional skills in practical lessons preparing them well for progression and employment. For example, catering learners had to plan and prepare new desserts in a short period of time to the high standards that would be expected in a commercial restaurant.
- Learners develop good personal, social and work-related skills through meaningful work experience, visits, guest speakers and classroom activities. For example, in health and social care, learners created detailed and relevant posters about psychological behaviour and then presented their research to their class, demonstrating their ability to summarise information and present findings well.
- The standard of learners' behaviour is good. They are punctual and show respect for each other and their teachers. Learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from effective additional learning support in lessons, enabling them to make good progress.
- Learners receive good advice and guidance on choosing the most appropriate study programme that is relevant to their future career aspirations. Learners receive good careers guidance during their programme, resulting in learners having a clear understanding of their next steps in achieving their future education and employment goals.
- Managers design the curriculum to meet the needs of individual learners who are not ready to move to the next level in their studies. For example, in childcare and health and social care a family care skills course is being delivered for learners who have completed their level 1 or 2 course but who have not developed sufficient skills to progress to a higher level.

Adult learning programmes

require improvement

- The college delivers adult learning programmes to approximately 2,650 learners and the vast majority study part time. Learners study courses from entry level to level 3 in English and mathematics, access to higher education and vocational subjects. Managers work well with community groups and employers to ensure that adult learning courses are aligned with local needs and job opportunities.
- The college's community learning programme successfully meets the needs of adults to help them return to work and support them in their everyday lives, for example helping their children to read. The courses are delivered in suitably located and equipped venues and at times to make access for learners as easy as possible. For example, an 'empowering parents' programme provides English courses for learners while their children attend the nursery where the classes are delivered.
- The access to higher education programme effectively provides an opportunity for adults to re-enter education to improve their career and employability prospects. Teachers plan and deliver learning well. A wide range of activities engage learners and provide good challenge for them to develop their confidence in completing research, analysing more complex data and presenting their findings. For example, learners studying psychology debated euthanasia and its impact on society. As a result of effective teaching and

learning on access courses learners make good progress and are prepared well for progression into higher education.

- Learners' targets on the access to higher education courses are aspirational for them to meet their intended goal and progress to their university of choice. Almost all learners achieve this ambition. Targets for adult learners who attend study programmes are not sufficiently challenging and they do not all make the expected progress given their starting points.
- Adult learners make good progress in developing their skills in English and mathematics, particularly on community learning programmes where learners become more confident, improve their chances of gaining employment and enable them to participate more effectively in everyday life.
- Adult learners receive good advice and guidance, which helps them make informed choices about study options, career development and progression. Learners on access courses comment on how supportive and helpful staff are in helping them apply to, and progress into, higher education.
- Adult learners at the college are respectful and show consideration for others' views and values.

Apprenticeships

require improvement

- The college's apprenticeship provision accounts for approximately 10% of its funded work. The college has 173 apprentices and 111 advanced apprentices. The majority of apprentices follow programmes in construction trades, business administration, health and social care, engineering, hairdressing and catering.
- The proportion of intermediate apprentices achieving their qualifications within the planned time in 2014/15 was above the rate for similar providers. However, advanced apprentices took too long to complete their qualifications and achievement was below the rate for similar providers in 2014/15. The majority of current apprentices are making good progress.
- Apprentices receive good advice and guidance prior to starting the programme. Consequently, apprentices understand the requirements of their programmes and the opportunities and next steps they need to take to progress in their career.
- Vocational tutors and assessors do not always use the assessment of apprentices' current skills and knowledge to inform the planning of learning. Targets set during progress reviews are not always sufficiently challenging and do not clearly state what apprentices need to do to make more rapid progress, or extend their understanding and skills beyond the requirements of their qualification. Consequently, the most able and experienced learners do not make the progress of which they are capable and their effectiveness in the workplace is not enhanced enough.
- Managers work closely with a wide range of local employers to develop programmes that are relevant and up to date. Employers value highly the relationship they have with the college. 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. For example, health and social care apprentices working with young people with learning difficulties are able to choose specialist units related to this aspect of care. Similarly, advanced apprentices on plumbing programmes study specialist units in the installation of solar panels.
- Specialist functional skills tutors visit the workplace and provide effective support for apprentices taking qualifications in English and mathematics. The number of apprentices who are successful in achieving these qualifications is good this year.
- Tutors and assessors do not integrate the development of apprentices' English and mathematics skills into vocational programmes sufficiently, resulting in apprentices not understanding how to apply these skills in their work. Apprentices' progress in improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar is too slow, as tutors do not consistently identify errors in apprentices' written work and apprentices continue to make the same mistakes.
- Apprentices develop vocationally relevant skills that are valued by their employers. On- and off-the-job training delivered in the workplace is planned collaboratively with employers so that learners develop their practical skills quickly. As a result, apprentices make a notable contribution to their employers' businesses.
- Where apprentices attend off-the-job training in college, the integration of theory and practice is not always effective. Teaching of theoretical knowledge does not always take place at the most relevant point to underpin the development of apprentices' practical skills and does not always closely match the demands of their job role.
- Apprentices benefit from good pastoral support provided by assessors and training coordinators. The college offers a wide range of support services which are actively promoted to apprentices in the workplace. A large number of apprentices have accessed specialist support and resources from the college's support services. For example, several apprentices have borrowed laptops so they can complete their assignments at home and other apprentices have been helped to deal with sensitive personal issues.

Provision for learners with high needs

requires improvement

- The college has 82 high-needs learners from two local authorities. Thirty-eight of the learners are on programmes specifically designed to support their high needs. The remaining learners are enrolled on a breadth of vocational subjects, which range from foundation to advanced level and include a wide range of subjects including animal care, horticulture, media and construction.
- The quality of teaching in lessons does not always ensure that high-needs learners engage adequately with learning. For example, teachers frequently provide answers to questions before giving learners enough time to respond and this has a negative impact on them improving their confidence and interaction with their peers. In some lessons, teachers do not use questioning techniques well to check learners' understanding or to monitor in-class progress.
- Managers and teachers do not sufficiently monitor the setting and reviewing of learners' targets identified in their education, health and care plans. Consequently, managers and teachers do not ensure that all high-needs learners have individualised learning programmes that support the enhancement of their social and life skills.
- Teachers' feedback on learners' written assignments is adequate. Teachers conduct frequent learner reviews providing details on areas to improve and this supports learners' good progress. Learners' development of spelling, punctuation and grammar are not developed quickly enough as teachers do not consistently identify errors in learners' work.
- Too few high-needs learners have the opportunity to participate in relevant work experience that supports their employment aspirations or enhances their understanding of industry expectations.
- Initial assessment of learners' starting points is very good. Learners benefit from good and detailed transition planning between their school and college to ensure that they are enrolled on the best-fit programme for their needs and aspirations. For example, managers engage a wide range of external organisations and implement several strategies, such as interviewing learners, parents, and school representatives to assess learners' abilities and support needs before they join the college.
- Learning mentors work well with learners to help them understand and implement teachers' expectations, both within specialist provision and on vocational courses. The support is planned into the lesson activity and is enabling learners to progress towards achieving their qualifications. However, a small minority of learning support staff dominate learners' activity to the point that they do the task for them.
- Learners benefit from good information, advice and guidance that support them as they prepare to leave the college. Managers and teachers use their excellent links with external agencies, local authorities, training providers and the voluntary sector to enrich learners' experience while on programme and to encourage participation within their local community. This results in learners and their parents receiving high-quality and detailed information that enables them to build strong links within their community.

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	4,721
Principal/CEO	David Wood
Website address	www.lmc.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)	160	804	532	924	633	428	31	118
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	199	199	98	158	1	6		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	21		6		27			
Number of learners aged 14–16								
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 Football Association Ltd ■ Lancaster Training Services ■ Piccadilly Gardens Ltd ■ The Skills Network Ltd 							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Stephen Miller, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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John Berry	Ofsted Inspector
Howard Browes	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Grant	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Groves	Ofsted Inspector
Joanna Stokes	Ofsted Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector
Fadia Clarke	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the vice principal, curriculum and quality standards, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the college'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 college.

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