

Preston's College

General further education college

Inspection dates

29 November–2 December 2016

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	16 to 19 study programmes	Require improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Require improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Require improvement
Outcomes for learners	Require 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

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not of a consistently high standard; learners, particularly the most able, are not sufficiently challenged in their learning, and as a result too few achieve the grades of which they are capable.
- Leaders and managers have not yet achieved consistently high standards across the provision; quality assurance and data management are not yet sufficiently effective.
- Too many learners, particularly those on 16 to 19 study programmes, fail to attend English and mathematics classes; they do not develop their English and mathematical skills well enough or achieve their qualifications in these subjects.
- Achievement rates on construction and engineering apprenticeships were low in 2015/16, particularly for apprentices aged 16 to 23.
- Too many learners on 16 to 19 study programmes do not attend their lessons, or arrive late.
- Teachers do not monitor learners' progress well enough from their initial starting points, or use this information to ensure that learners make the progress expected of them; as a result, too many current learners are making slow progress.

The provider has the following strengths

- Learners demonstrate exemplary behaviour and good relationships with teachers and other learners, leading to high levels of mutual respect and tolerance.
- Managers and staff collaborate very effectively with employers and other partners to inform and develop the curriculum, so that it meets local needs and skills priorities well.
- Most learners participate in beneficial enrichment activities which enable them to develop good work-related skills.
- Governors now provide more effective challenge and support to leaders and senior managers; they have helped managers through a difficult process of change, and set a challenging vision for the college's future.

Full report

Information about the provider

The college serves the local community of Preston, with a small proportion of adult learning delivered in the community. It offers provision in a wide range of subject areas.

Approximately a quarter of learners at the college are from the most deprived areas of Preston. The proportion of the local population who have no qualifications is higher than that nationally. The proportion of pupils in Preston at age 16 gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including mathematics and English, is lower than that nationally.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that 16 to 19 study programme learners attend all lessons, and are punctual
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons carefully, taking into account the starting points of learners, so that learning activities challenge all learners, including the most able
 - improving attendance and teaching in English and mathematics and quickly developing learners' skills so that they achieve their GCSE and functional skills qualifications.
- In order to improve standards across the college, ensure that leaders and managers closely and accurately monitor the quality of provision, by improving the effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements and the management of data.
- Improve achievements for construction and engineering apprentices aged 16 to 23.
- Ensure that managers and staff monitor learners' progress closely and use information from the college's tracking systems to identify those learners who are making slow progress; ensure staff provide timely support so that learners are able to catch up and achieve the grades of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The principal, senior leaders, governors and managers are committed to an ambitious vision of providing a high-quality, enterprising college; they seek to develop highly employable learners by enhancing their skills to gain employment, advance their career or progress to further study.
- Leaders and managers have been too slow to identify and resolve the decline in learners' achievements in 2014/15. In reviewing the reasons for the decline, leaders recognised the need to restructure the senior leadership team in order to bring about improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. The restructure is not yet fully complete.
- As a result of the restructure, heads of school are now accountable for improvements to learners' progress and outcomes, and for improved standards of teaching, learning and assessment. Through monthly reviews of each school, senior managers now have a greater oversight of progress towards improvements, when measured against college performance indicators. New performance indicators for each school have recently been introduced, but it is too soon for them to demonstrate the required impact.
- College data indicates that overall achievement rates for 2015/16 have improved. However, during the same period, too many learners did not make the progress expected of them given their starting points. Most learners did not meet or exceed the grades expected of them. Achievement of AS and A-level qualifications was particularly low in 2014/15 and 2015/16. Leaders have withdrawn A-level programmes from the curriculum.
- Managers have strengthened the arrangements for reviewing the quality and outcomes of the work of individual staff, after identifying issues in 2014/15. They have focused more strongly on weak performance by staff, and have provided timely support and training to help teachers to improve their practice. Where staff do not make sufficient and rapid improvement, managers swiftly implement capability processes.
- Leaders and managers recognise that the self-assessment process for 2014/15 did not result in a sufficiently accurate evaluation of the college's provision. The self-assessment report was descriptive and many key judgements were not sufficiently evaluative. The 2015/16 draft self-assessment report is too descriptive and overly optimistic, particularly in judging the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Links to the quality improvement plan in the draft self-assessment report for 2015/16 are not sufficiently clear.
- Managers have recently introduced a new process for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment, that includes focused short observations. Currently, judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment do not take sufficient account of learners' in-year progress or attendance. In their records, observers do not make sufficiently clear how teachers can improve their teaching practice to tackle the areas for improvement identified during the observation.
- Managers focus too much on developing systems to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for learners rather than focusing on the impact they are having on improving the quality of provision. For example, the system for monitoring learners' progress has been developed; however, the use of the system varies significantly across the college from comprehensive and informative to incomplete. As a result, managers are unsure as to how well learners make progress across each of the curriculum areas.

- Managers' actions to raise achievements in English and mathematics have not yet had the intended impact and remain a significant concern for senior leaders. Too few learners, particularly on 16 to 19 study programmes, achieve GCSE English and mathematics at grades A* to C or functional skills at level 1 and 2.
- The college has strong collaborative links with a wide range of employers and stakeholders. Leaders and managers use these links and good local labour market intelligence well to inform the development of the curriculum. The college positions itself well in the community, meeting the needs of employers and local enterprise partnership (LEP) priorities. Senior managers have skilfully developed the curriculum to meet specific employer needs. For example, they have developed specific community-based English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes to support the recruitment and employment of overseas nurses within the National Health Service (NHS); and prepared construction learners to meet the needs of construction employers wanting to recruit work-ready employees within the local area.
- A strong ethos of mutual respect, together with zero tolerance of any form of discrimination or bullying, results in exemplary standards of behaviour by learners in a very inclusive and welcoming environment. Senior managers closely monitor the performance of different groups of learners, such as those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; children looked after and care leavers. However, managers had not identified that learners who were eligible for free school meals might not achieve as well as their peers.
- Leaders and managers pay close attention to developing learners' understanding of tolerance, respect and democratic values. These core British values have been promoted through 'Preston's college values'. Awareness of diversity is promoted well through events and activities such as Diversity and Respect Week. Projects such as 'Heart' (Help End Abusive Relationships in Teens) help learners develop an understanding of positive relationships.

The governance of the provider

- Governors recognise that reports to the board in 2015/16 were not always accurate and, as a result, governors were not able to provide sufficiently rigorous challenge. Governors now scrutinise in detail reports and papers presented to the board and are able to provide high levels of challenge. For example, governors are not yet satisfied with the quality of the self-assessment report for 2015/16 and have requested a number of amendments to be made before final validation of the report.
- Governors have provided good support to college leaders in restructuring the college management structure and changing the leadership style and culture.
- Governors have a clear view of the college's strengths and areas for development and challenge leaders and managers well to improve the quality of provision.
- Governors' good links with the community help leaders and managers develop a clear vision for the college and the curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff, volunteers and subcontractors to ensure their suitability. Records of staff checks are clear, detailed and up to date. Safeguarding policies and procedures are appropriate, updated regularly and understood well by staff.

- Staff and learners understand the system for reporting safeguarding concerns, and to whom they should report issues and concerns. Designated safeguarding officers have appropriate qualifications for their role, and all staff and governors regularly complete mandatory safeguarding training. Managers have good links with their local authority children's services and police forces, and use them effectively to provide support and to inform safeguarding practices for staff. Learners and apprentices in the workplace have a good understanding of safe working practices.
- Managers have implemented the 'Prevent' duty effectively. A comprehensive and detailed risk assessment is in place and staff understand how to identify any learners at risk of radicalisation or extremism. As a result, they are clear about where to refer learners if they have any concerns. Referrals to external agencies are prompt, and comprehensive records are kept of all referrals. Although learners are aware of how to report any concerns, they have a limited understanding of the threats of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too many learners across all provision types are not making enough progress towards achieving their qualifications or apprenticeships. Teaching, learning and assessment are not yet consistently good.
- Teachers do not plan well enough or consider what learners already know or the skills they already have, which means that the most able learners are insufficiently challenged in their learning and less able learners often struggle to keep up. As a result, too many learners make insufficient progress given their starting points and fail to achieve their full potential.
- In many lessons, teachers do not ask sufficiently detailed questions to check the understanding of all learners. For example, teachers often direct questions to the whole class, with the result that learners shout out poorly developed answers or the same learners constantly answer the questions. Where teachers are skilful in their questioning, learners' knowledge and understanding are carefully checked, and learners are challenged to use higher-level thinking skills and develop skills of critical evaluation.
- Teachers in the majority of curriculum areas do not use college systems to monitor the progress learners make rigorously or routinely. Targets set by teachers and assessors lack challenge: they are often too general for learners to develop specific skills or make good progress. Learners, particularly those on 16 to 19 study programmes, work towards their expected target grades but do not sufficiently develop the skills or knowledge needed to achieve or exceed their target grades. Teachers do not spot quickly enough when learners fall behind in their studies, and so teachers are slow to help students get back on track.
- Teachers provide clear and detailed feedback to learners and apprentices following assessment; however, learners do not routinely act upon it, and so do not improve their skills and knowledge further. Too often, apprentices do not receive helpful feedback to improve; assessors' feedback is based on the completion of tasks instead of the development of skills. Oral feedback in most lessons does not reinforce learning objectives or challenge misconceptions well enough.
- In discrete provision, learners with high needs such as learning difficulties and/or disabilities lack sufficient challenge in their learning. Too few learners are aware of their

targets; teachers do not track learners' progress against the requirements of non-accredited qualifications, so that learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Managers have recently introduced strategies to improve teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics, but the impact of these strategies on learners' progress is not yet evident. Too few learners make good progress in these subjects, particularly in achieving their English and mathematics qualifications. Teachers in a few vocational subjects are adept at developing learners' English skills.
- Most teachers and assessors use their industrial and technical skills well to reinforce learning in the relevant vocational context. Learners develop good practical and technical skills. Learners frequently use accurate complex technical terminology in practical and theoretical lessons.
- Many apprentices benefit from good on- and off-the-job training which develops their skills and knowledge well. Apprentices skilfully apply their knowledge and understanding to practical tasks in the workplace. For example, learners contribute well to discussions about how to make workplace improvements.
- Teachers and assessors support most apprentices and learners well; this good practice has led to improved confidence and independence in learning. Learners who need extra help are supported effectively by the college's pastoral and welfare team to remain at college and achieve their qualifications.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Too many learners do not attend their lessons or arrive at their lessons late. When a number of learners arrive late to a lesson, this wastes further time and disrupts learning for the whole class. Attendance has improved slightly in the current year but significant variations remain between curriculum areas and types of provision. Attendance at English and mathematics lessons is particularly low.
- Too many learners do not make enough progress in improving their English and mathematical skills. Adult learners on discrete programmes make better progress in English and mathematics than apprentices, learners on 16 to 19 study programmes and learners in discrete high-needs provision. In vocational lessons, the teaching of applied English and mathematical skills varies too much across subject area and types of provision. For example, apprentices are given past papers to prepare for English and mathematics functional skills examinations with little or no teaching to help them prepare, but learners on 16 to 19 study programmes who are studying English and mathematics at entry level receive good teaching and, as a result, most achieve their functional skills qualifications.
- Managers recognise that careers guidance was poor in 2014/15. Following a review of careers guidance, successful initiatives to improve information, advice and guidance were introduced. Staff now provide a range of good information, advice and guidance to support learners in making career decisions; this help is provided prior to enrolment, during their studies and at the end of their course. As a result, the proportion of 16 to 19 study programme learners who leave their courses early has reduced significantly. At the end of their courses, most learners progress to higher levels of study, apprenticeships or employment. However, the destinations of too many learners on study programmes, adult learners and learners with high needs are unknown.

- Learners generally develop a good understanding of the values of British society, and many learners are able to demonstrate understanding of concepts such as democracy, tolerance and respect for the views of others. Although topics such as radicalisation and extremism are discussed in lessons, not all learners have a clear understanding of these issues or how they may affect them.
- Learners develop good employability skills through the excellent facilities and resources in their vocational subjects, particularly in engineering, construction and hairdressing. Learners use industry-standard equipment competently and confidently. Learners' skills development is supported by a range of well-attended enrichment activities such as employability workshops, 'masterclasses' from employers and college-based projects. Managers recognise that the development of learners' employability skills through relevant external work experience requires improvement. While pockets of strong practice exist, this is not consistent across all subject areas. Arrangements are in place to increase work experience opportunities in 2016/17.
- Learners' behaviour is exemplary. They behave very well in lessons, around the college and in the workplace. Learners foster good relationships with their teachers and each other, developing highly effective working practices such as teamwork and good communication.
- Teachers and managers provide high levels of pastoral and academic support to help learners stay on their programme and achieve their qualifications. The 'Back on Track Programme' is effective in supporting learners who have been identified as falling behind in their studies to catch up. However, learners are not always referred to this programme quickly enough.
- Adult learners, particularly those on ESOL programmes, improve their confidence and self-esteem as they prepare for employment or further study. Learners with high needs, on discrete provision, make good progress in developing independence.
- Learners feel that the college is a safe environment; they understand how to stay safe and who they should go to if they have any concerns. In practical sessions and the workplace, learners demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety procedures and use them effectively.

Outcomes for learners

Require improvement

- In 2015/16, a much higher proportion of learners on 16 to 19 study programmes, including learners with high needs in vocational areas, achieved their qualifications. However, achievement varies too much across subject areas. For example, achievement rates are high on performing arts, information and communication technology and leisure, travel and tourism courses but they are low and declining on health and social care, engineering and construction courses.
- Achievement rates on AS-level and A-level programmes in 2015/16 were low; as a result, leaders and managers took the decision to remove these qualifications from their curriculum offer for 2016/17.
- The proportion of learners with high needs in discrete provision who achieve accredited and non-accredited qualifications is high, but too few achieve their qualifications in English and mathematics.

- Achievement rates on apprenticeship programmes are high and most apprentices complete their programmes in the planned timescale. However, too few apprentices aged 16 to 23 complete their apprenticeships in construction and engineering, which account for a third of apprenticeship provision.
- Too many learners across all levels, particularly the most able, are not making the progress expected of them given their starting points. As a result, too few learners are achieving or exceeding their in-year targets. For example, one third of learners at level 3 achieved their target grade, but half of level 3 learners achieved qualifications with grades significantly lower than those expected of them.
- Too few learners on 16 to 19 study programmes achieve English and mathematics GCSE at grades A* to C or functional skills qualifications at level 1 and 2. Achievement of functional skills English and mathematics at entry level is high. Adult learners are more successful in achieving English and mathematics qualifications than those aged 16 to 19.
- Adults on ESOL programmes make good progress in class and achieve their qualifications. Most learners progress to higher-level ESOL qualifications, vocational programmes or apprenticeships at the college. However, too many adult learners on level 3 access to higher education programmes do not achieve their qualifications or progress to higher education.
- Managers collect and analyse a range of data on the destinations of learners. Where destinations are known, learners progress to further or higher education, apprenticeships or employment. However, approximately one fifth of learner destinations are unknown.
- Managers recognise that male apprentices achieve less well than their female counterparts, but they did not identify underachievement by learners previously eligible for free school meals on 16 to 19 study programmes. Recent actions that have been put in place to reduce differences in achievement have not yet had any impact.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Require improvement

- At the time of inspection, there were 1,675 learners aged 16 to 19 following study programmes at the college; this represents just under half of the provider's provision. Owing to significant underperformance in A levels, A-level provision was removed in 2016/17. The largest curriculum areas are visual and performing arts, engineering, health and social care and preparation for life and work.
- Managers have implemented ambitious strategies to improve study programmes but the impact is not yet consistent in all areas. Too few lessons across the provision provide sufficient challenge to enable learners to make expected progress based on their initial starting points; learners cover the same work regardless of their abilities. Although college data from 2015/16 shows an improvement in achievement rates, in a significant number of subject areas, especially in level 3 provision, learners do not make expected rates of progress.
- College managers are aware of the need to improve learners' skills in GCSE English and mathematics, and as a result have taken steps to emphasise the importance of these skills with both staff and learners across the college. However, it is too soon to see any impact. Teachers do not appropriately personalise learning to meet the individual needs

of learners, hindering their progress. Attendance is often poor in English and mathematics lessons.

- A few lessons are challenging and encourage learners to work hard and monitor their own progress. For example, in performing arts, learners used complex technical vocabulary to describe their body movements. An element of competition within these groups to obtain a place for a paid public performance motivated them further. In level 1 childcare, learners designed age-appropriate toys and had to give reasons for their choice of material that they would use to enhance tactile stimulation.
- Learners develop good practical skills in many subjects. Learners in media use digital information technology (IT) equipment to create video resources for musical performances. They create a narrative based on their client's needs and work collaboratively to meet these demands. However, in a few practical lessons, learners do not have the opportunity to fine-tune their practical skills to industrial standards, owing to a lack of understanding of how to link theory to practice.
- The large majority of teachers provide very regular, helpful feedback to learners, which enables them to make progress. However, in the small minority of weaker examples, teachers provide no feedback. In too many cases learners do not use the feedback provided to improve their work. Teachers' recording of learners' progress, on internal tracking systems, varies in quality across the provision. They often set targets which are not specific and do not challenge their learners to make better progress.
- The learning environment at the college is excellent and learners have access to state-of-the-art equipment to fine-tune their employability skills. Teachers regularly use their industrial experience to reinforce learners' understanding of the skills needed to be successful in the workplace.
- The college has forged good links with local employers; learners in health, sport and early years benefit from valuable work placements. College managers have plans in place to develop further external work placements. Currently, inconsistency in the opportunities available across different curriculum areas results in too few learners having relevant external work experience.
- Information, advice and guidance provided by the college have improved. Staff guide the majority of learners onto appropriate courses that build on their prior attainment. As a result, more learners have stayed on their courses this year and more have expressed satisfaction in surveys. Learners with high needs on 16 to 19 study programmes benefit from additional learning support and make at least as much progress as their peers.
- Many learners participate in the wide range of enrichment activities to develop their personal and employability skills. Learners benefit from organising charity shows, external trips, competitions and visits from guest speakers. Managers closely monitor and evaluate the impact of activities; the significant majority of learners develop enhanced employability skills. For example, learners in engineering visit the Airbus A380 manufacturing plant and obtain flight experience at local airports; learners in visual and performing arts have trips to Excel London and a trade fair for video games in Birmingham to attend classes and learn about progression opportunities.
- Learners demonstrate safe working practices in practical lessons appropriate to industrial standards. They show good awareness of safeguarding, including online safety. Learners understand the idea of mutual respect in the workplace and the requirements of working in a multicultural society. However, they are less well versed in the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.

- Managers recognise that attendance in many curriculum areas requires improvement and have introduced a number of initiatives to achieve this; however, these have not yet made a difference. Behaviour in lessons is excellent and learners show great respect both for each other and their teachers.

Adult learning programmes

Require improvement

- At the time of inspection, approximately 5,153 learners were enrolled on adult learning programmes, mostly on part-time courses, and comprising approximately one third of the college's provision. Courses range from level 1 to level 3; additionally, a small number of learners are following community learning programmes. The largest curriculum areas are preparation for life and work which includes ESOL, English and mathematics qualifications, and health and social care.
- Attendance in too many lessons is low, leading to poor progress for those who are frequently absent. Most learners are well prepared for lessons but too many arrive late and disrupt learning. Teachers do not challenge latecomers sufficiently.
- Teachers' tracking of learners' progress across subject areas varies greatly. Teachers do not consistently monitor the progress of learners on full-time courses, and fail to identify learners who have fallen behind with their work. As a result, too many adult learners leave their programmes early or do not achieve their qualifications.
- Most learners know that targets were set at the beginning of their course, but too many do not know what their target grade is or whether they are meeting or exceeding their targets.
- Teachers' feedback to learners following assessment is generally helpful in supporting them to make progress. Teachers accurately identify errors in learners' work. However, targets for learners are often too general rather than providing specific steps towards improvement, and so do not help them make the necessary progress.
- Not enough learners benefit from good teaching and learning. Too many teachers do not challenge learners sufficiently well; they are quick to accept poorly developed answers from learners, and do not challenge them with higher-level questions to improve their knowledge and understanding of the topic. Teachers do not plan their lessons well enough to enable all learners to make rapid progress. Consequently, the most able learners complete their work quickly and competently, but have to wait until the whole class has completed the activity before they can move on, thus slowing their progress.
- In a few lessons, the completion of subject-relevant projects helps learners prepare themselves for examinations and future careers. For example, in health and social care, learners were preparing to promote an area of health in a college health campaign; in functional skills mathematics, learners applied their knowledge of metric measurements, and the concepts of perimeter and area, as they planned the renovation of a property using scale drawings.
- Leaders and managers have developed learning programmes that meet the needs of the local community, learners and employers. Close working relationships with Jobcentre Plus and employers have resulted in a range of suitable programmes to help the unemployed into jobs or further study.
- Most learners on ESOL programmes develop good communication skills and achieve their qualifications; many progress to employment, particularly in healthcare apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships

Require improvement

- At the time of inspection, around 1,100 apprentices were following apprenticeship programmes. The majority follow programmes in health and social care, engineering and construction apprenticeships.
- Current apprentices, in the majority of curriculum areas, are making good progress and achieve their full qualifications. However, too few apprentices aged 16 to 23 achieve their apprenticeship qualifications in construction and engineering, which accounts for a third of apprenticeships, and is a growth area in the college.
- Too many teachers do not plan off-the-job learning sufficiently well to meet the needs of apprentices. As a result, the most able apprentices do not progress as quickly as expected, and less able apprentices struggle to keep up with their work. In a few lessons, teachers and assessors do not take sufficient account of information about apprentices' starting points and prior learning; as a result, staff's expectations of learners' abilities are too low.
- Teachers set targets set in many classroom-based sessions which are too descriptive and do not support apprentices to make rapid progress. Teachers do not always skilfully assess apprentices' progress or provide constructive feedback to help apprentices to improve.
- Teachers and assessors do not skilfully develop apprentices' English and mathematical skills. Teachers and assessors do not track or monitor apprentices' progress in English and mathematics sufficiently well. As a result, too many apprentices do not complete their full programme of study within the planned timeframes because they have not achieved their functional skills qualifications.
- Leaders and managers do not use data and college monitoring systems well enough to identify particular groups of apprentices that underperform or to measure the progress of current apprentices.
- Employers are closely involved in workplace training. Apprentices receive constructive feedback in reviews, which helps them to make good progress towards achieving their apprenticeship qualifications.
- Assessors support learners well, so that apprentices gain high levels of confidence about the industry in which they work, correctly use professional terminology and develop their technical skills.
- Apprentices, teachers and assessors make good links between theory and workplace activities and, as a result, apprentices gain valuable skills for employment. Excellent resources such as industry-standard equipment in the college's science and technology centre help apprentices to develop their technical skills, which they then use proficiently in the workplace.
- Apprentices in the workplace work well independently; they are confident in carrying out duties without supervision, contributing to their employers' business needs through high levels of productivity. Employers recognise the skills apprentices bring to the workplace and the contribution they make to their businesses.
- Staff ensure that health and safety practice reflects current good industrial practice. Apprentices carry out safe working practices and adhere to health and safety rules within the workplace and during off-the-job training.

Provision for learners with high needs

Requires improvement

- The college receives funding for 77 learners with high needs. Twenty-eight learners are taught in discrete groups with specialist staff, while five learners are working in supported internships. The remaining learners are studying on mainstream vocational programmes.
- Staff recognise that they do not recognise and record progress and achievement (RARPA) for learners in discrete provision effectively. Learners' long-term goals and education, health and care plans (EHCP) are not sufficiently broken down into small, achievable steps to help them make progress. As a result, very few learners are aware of their individual targets or what they need to do to reach their long-term goals.
- Learners, particularly those on discrete programmes, do not have regular or planned access to therapies such as speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and behaviour support. Very limited specialist support in the classroom hinders the progress learners with these specialised needs can make.
- Staff benefit from regular continuing professional development activities which link directly to the health and support needs of learners. However, in discrete provision, the impact of these activities is limited. For example, little use is made of communication strategies such as signing, picture and symbol support for reading and writing or the use of assistive, augmentative technology for learners who use non-verbal communication or have very limited skills of reading and writing.
- Too few learners have the opportunity for an external work placement that effectively reflects their individual needs, long-term goals or aspirations. The majority of learners on discrete programmes access external work experience as a whole group at one local supermarket. Opportunities for learners to participate in effective internal work experience are limited. Although learners staff a college café, use the adapted kitchen to stock the café with food and serve in the café, they do not participate in additional internal work experience in other areas of the college.
- Learners on supported internships participate in good-quality individual internal work placements at the beginning of their programmes, before moving on to external placements when they have developed skills necessary for the workplace.
- Staff's support for learners with high needs is good; most learners receive skilful and regular one-to-one support either in or outside of the classroom, which helps most learners on mainstream vocational provision to make good progress in their learning.
- Most learners on vocational programmes and supported internships benefit from good-quality teaching and learning which is individually tailored to meet their needs and helps them achieve their learning goals. Teachers provide well-planned targets and strategies to support learners, and help them to develop independence and confidence in order to achieve their qualifications. As a result, learners with high needs make progress at least similar to, and often better than, their peers.
- Learners on discrete provision build their confidence and improve their communication skills as they learn to navigate their way around larger learning environments, go to a busy refectory at breaktimes and develop skills in independent travel.
- Learners have high aspirations for future learning and careers. Learners report that their choice of course is supporting them to achieve their aspirations. Most learners progress to higher-level courses, employment or training.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130740
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	9,653
Principal/CEO	Dr Lis Smith
Telephone number	01772 225 000
Website	www.preston.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	278	1,605	777	1,022	809	683	75	522
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	323	343	123	308	0	86		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	45		0		45			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	114 (on school roll)							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	77							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Calico Enterprise Limited Lancashire Combined Fire and Rescue Authority Skills Recruitment Limited Sir Tom Finney trading as Preston North End FC Lynne Croome Victoria Doherty trading as VMR Training Services Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant principal, quality and curriculum, 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 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 college.

Inspection team

Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Miller	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Barnett	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Bramley	Ofsted Inspector
Mohammed Feeaz	Ofsted Inspector
Thomas Fay	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Gillett	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah McGrath	Ofsted Inspector
Tanya Young	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Wainwright	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Employer View

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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