

Berkshire College of Agriculture

Specialist college

Inspection dates

7–10 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Full-time students have an exceptional knowledge of British values and how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- Learners develop very good practical skills, such as landscaping and animal husbandry, and skills for work in most subjects.
- Most students benefit from good teaching, learning and assessment, which help them link theory to practice, such as linking theories of infection control procedures to their work in veterinary practices.
- The cohesive team of leaders and managers know the college well and what needs to be improved.
- The very diverse student body are respectful of each other, staff and their environment. They respect and value each other's opinions. They are proud to be students at the college.
- Students develop their use of technical and vocational language and their use of English and mathematics very well.
- Learners benefit from very good personal and academic care, guidance and support.
- Governors and senior leaders have a clear and well-considered vision for the future of the college.
- Teachers do not assess learners' work quickly enough or provide them with feedback that helps them improve.
- Students studying GCSE mathematics are not yet making good progress.
- The quality of apprenticeship provision is not improving rapidly enough.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) is a specialist land-based college located on a single site on the outskirts of the town of Maidenhead. The campus includes a 144-hectare estate comprising a range of land-based units, including an equine centre, an animal unit and landscaped gardens as well as sports facilities. Provision is offered in the main land-based subjects, sports and public services, and several other subjects including creative arts. Recently re-introduced to the subjects offered, courses in agriculture use facilities at local dairy farms for teaching and learning.
- Over half of the learners travel to the college from neighbouring large towns such as High Wycombe and Slough, using coaches provided by the college. The college is located in an area of relative prosperity, but there are some areas of greater deprivation locally. In west Berkshire, students make better than average progress at the end of key stage 4. Just under two thirds of students leave school with GCSE grades C or above in English and mathematics.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve rapidly the quality of the apprenticeship provision, by:
 - ensuring that assessors review the progress that apprentices are making with them and their employers more frequently, setting specific targets for learning and progress within challenging timescales
 - providing good quality off-the-job training that reflects the level of the apprenticeship and the skills, roles and responsibilities that apprentices have in their jobs
 - developing apprentices' understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, and of British values.
- Improve rapidly the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in GCSE mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan and teach lessons that enable students to develop and master the specific skills that they are not yet proficient in
 - using information on what students have achieved in lessons to plan further learning, checking learning frequently and thoroughly.
- Improve the progress that students, especially the most able, make, by:
 - ensuring that teachers assess students' work promptly after submission and provide them with feedback on their work that identifies clearly what they have done well and what skills, knowledge or understanding they need to develop further
 - agreeing specific actions with students that will help them achieve or exceed their target grades.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders know the performance of their college accurately and care for and develop both their staff and learners well. Leaders are ambitious and have realistic and well-developed plans on how they will continue to improve the quality of provision. Since the previous inspection, leaders have achieved most of the recommendations identified.
- Leaders and managers work effectively with teachers to ensure that learners get a good experience on their courses. Managers' observations of teachers throughout the year result in short-term targets for improvement that most teachers work effectively to achieve. Staff share good practice during weekly staff meetings to help each other improve.
- Senior leaders assess the effectiveness of the college accurately and they know what needs to improve. All staff contribute to the department-level assessment that informs the overall college assessment. Staff use the learner and employer views, taken from surveys, to inform their judgements. However, leaders have not acted quickly enough to improve the provision of apprenticeships and mathematics.
- Senior leaders have taken direct responsibility for managing English and mathematics provision, to ensure that more learners achieve their qualifications. Leaders have put effective strategies in place for English and current learners are making good progress. Although students in GCSE mathematics are making better progress than in previous years, further improvement is still required. Senior leaders' weekly meetings with managers result in very specific targets to support the further development of mathematics teachers to improve the students' progress in GCSE mathematics.
- Senior leaders have good working relationships with local enterprise partnerships in both Buckinghamshire and the Royal County of Berkshire. Relevant staff have good links with local authorities and Jobcentre Plus to support learners into employment or further learning. Through well-attended employer liaison panels, managers ensure that courses meet the training needs of local and regional employers. Managers also use these relationships well to ensure the provision of high-quality work-experience placements for students on study programmes.
- Senior leaders have ensured that all groups of learners achieve equally well. Leaders previously identified a gap in achievement between male and female students; they investigated effectively, and put actions in place rapidly, which have reduced the gap.
- Learners are well informed about their choice of course by experienced staff. Staff ensure that learners have high-quality and accurate information, advice and guidance to help them make informed decisions about the subject and level of course on which to enrol. Consequently, the proportion of learners who left their course early has reduced further this year. Teachers' support for learners to help them decide on and move on to their next steps is very effective. Learners benefit from such things as one-to-one discussions with teachers, talks from employers and other industry experts and attending careers fairs.
- Leaders communicate clearly and effectively with staff, so that staff are fully aware of the current performance of the college, and what needs to improve further. Staff value this

and state that senior leaders also listen to their views and opinions. Learners value the clear and frequent communication they receive about their college and their progress.

- Leaders ensure that a diverse student population gets on well together, respects each other and values different beliefs and opinions. Managers have devised a diversity calendar of events so that all students learn about a wide range of topics, such as religion, culture, health and well-being and diversity.
- Senior leaders have worked extensively with all teaching staff to ensure that they have a good understanding of British values. In turn, teachers ensure that students develop a thorough understanding of British values, skilfully linking these to relevant teaching topics in their subject. Consequently, students have a very good knowledge of life in modern Britain; they can clearly link these values to their working and home life. Student support staff have established a range of initiatives for all students to learn about British values; these include a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender group, transgender support and anti-bullying campaigns.
- Governors and senior leaders have clear and well-considered plans for the future of the college. They work together to ensure that these are financially viable and meet the skills needs of employers and learners. Governors and senior leaders have a clear, ambitious vision for the future of BCA.

The governance of the provider

- Governors bring a wide range of skills and experience to their roles, including land-based and finance, which they use well to make decisions about the college. They understand their roles and responsibilities well. Governors have action plans and performance indicators to ensure that they concentrate on key issues and support the progress and achievement of learners.
- Governors know the strengths and areas of improvement in the college. Governors challenge senior leaders rigorously and ensure that they receive responses at or before the next meeting. For example, they asked the principal to justify self-assessment grades and asked for additional documents and evidence to support these.
- The clerk of the corporation sits on the executive board and senior leadership team to ensure that governors are well informed about the current performance of the college.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Students' understanding of safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values is exceptional. Students could give clear examples of when they would refer concerns to a teacher. Learners feel safe both in college and in their work placements and adhere to health and safety requirements for their vocational areas. Apprentices need further support in understanding the importance of 'Prevent' and British values.
- All staff undertake training annually and they have a good understanding of how and when to refer learners to the appropriate person for support. Senior leaders ensure that staff are recruited appropriately and they receive good training in safeguarding during induction.

- Staff know their learners well. They maintain a list of at-risk learners that includes children looked after and those with severe mental and physical health problems and other personal issues. Staff responsible for safeguarding review this list weekly to ensure that these learners are supported appropriately. For example, staff gave a child looked after a birthday cake on their birthday, as they knew that the student would not get one at home.
- Senior leaders and governors receive timely safeguarding reports from the safeguarding team to ensure that all learners continue to be looked after well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across most subjects, teachers are good role models for their learners and have high expectations of what their learners can achieve. Learners benefit from teachers who are well qualified and have good subject knowledge and vocational expertise. As a result, the vast majority are motivated well to learn. Teachers use the good range of specialist resources at the college to enhance learning including online materials, which develop learners' skills in managing their own learning and time.
- Most teachers plan and teach lessons well. They are skilled at linking learning to students' English and mathematics skills and to the world of work. Teachers help students understand current issues in their subject particularly well in vocational classes and draw out their relevance to the subject being studied. For example, in animal care students sensitively and thoughtfully discuss emotive subjects such as poaching ivory and rhino horn. Agriculture learners understand why increased regulation due to recent outbreaks of avian influenza is impacting on free-range egg producers.
- The most effective teachers use a wide range of methods to check students' learning in lessons. They use questions skilfully to explore students' understanding of a topic. Teachers in these lessons use students' existing knowledge and skills well to extend their knowledge further. Students develop good communication skills in lessons when they present their findings and research to the rest of the class. In media, learners use television clips to illustrate music videos, placing them alongside the social history and fashions of different decades. Students use learning technology effectively in lessons, for example to answer interactive quizzes using their mobile phones. This confirms their learning and motivates them.
- Support for students who need extra help is very good. Teachers work very closely with support staff to ensure that teaching is informed well by individual students' support and development needs. Learning support staff work closely with teachers during lessons to provide appropriate support for individual students. Managers and teachers monitor students' progress closely and accurately; the support provided for students who are struggling or falling behind is prompt and effective.
- Students for whom the college receives high-needs funding receive very effective support and develop good independent living and/or learning skills as a result. They have detailed study plans which teachers use well to support them in their lessons. The specialist support they receive helps them to make the same or better progress as other students in their class.
- Learners develop good English and mathematics skills. Learners are developing good

speaking and listening skills and can discuss their work with confidence and pride, using technical terms and vocational language accurately. In high-needs provision, teachers provide helpful feedback to learners on how they can improve the content, presentation and accuracy of their written work. Most teachers are adept at helping students improve their mathematics and data handling skills in lessons. For example, in creative arts students produce scale models of stage and scenery sets to visualise the audience's perspective. In horticulture, students use trigonometry routinely when setting out beds and landscaping.

- Diversity is recognised and celebrated well at BCA. Staff challenge stereotypes and the very infrequent use of derogatory language and, as a result, students find the campus a harmonious place to learn and develop. Staff set high expectations for respect and tolerance and prepare students well for life in modern Britain. For example, students have recently produced two bold and colourful canvases that express their views on bullying, which are given pride of place in the college reception. However, apprentices' knowledge of diversity is not extended beyond the introduction they receive when they start their course.
- A minority of teachers do not check learners' understanding of the topic in lessons before moving onto new ones. Teachers' checks on learning in these lessons are superficial and do not fully explore the depth of learners' understanding. Consequently, a minority of learners do not understand well enough what they should have learned and this slows their progress. In a minority of cases, particularly in apprenticeships, staff do not assess or review apprentices' progress or achievement frequently enough for them to know how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- A minority of teaching, learning and assessment, such as in mathematics, early years and apprenticeships, does not reflect the good standards in other subjects. In these subjects, teachers' and assessors' expectations are too low and learners are not making sufficient progress. Learners do not always have enough work at a level and complexity they can best cope with. As a result those who find activities straightforward have to wait for others to finish and others find the work too difficult.
- In too many cases, teachers take too long to assess students' written work. Teachers' feedback on written work is too brief to enable students to know what it is they have done well and what it is they need to do to improve further, either in their current work or in future assignments.
- On- and off-the-job training for apprentices is not well organised and coordinated. Employers provide appropriate skills training in the workplace that ensures apprentices can do their jobs well. However, the quality of learning in college is not yet good enough and too much is at too low a level for the qualification. Teachers make too little use of apprentices' workplace skills and practices and as a result learners find too many lessons mundane and repetitive, which slows their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Students are respectful of each other and their learning environment. They understand well the British values of respect and tolerance and can talk with confidence about how these apply to living and working in modern Britain. Teachers have been very effective in helping students know how to stay safe at work and online and how to protect

themselves from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. They know what signs and behaviours might indicate that friends or family members are being radicalised and who they should report this to.

- Students' attendance at lessons has improved from the previous year and is now good, and the proportion of students who arrive late for lessons has decreased. However, students' rate of attendance at lessons for English and mathematics qualifications, despite improvements in the current academic year, is not yet as high as that for vocational lessons and requires improvement.
- Most students, particularly those on study programmes, participate in relevant external work-experience placements, during which they develop their practical and vocational skills further. Teachers prepare students well for this part of their course and employers value the enthusiasm and commitment with which students take part in work experience. As a result, several students gain part-time work or full-time job offers at the end of their course from their work-experience employer.
- Most students develop very good attitudes to learning and work as a result of the high expectations that senior leaders and teachers have. Students take pride in their work and their college. They prepare well for lessons. A few adult students have not yet developed good attitudes to learning.
- Students in most subjects take part in a wide range of additional activities to support their learning and/or their personal development. These include visits to employers' premises, trade shows and careers fairs. Agriculture and horse care students help out as stewards at the Royal County of Berkshire Show, and several have continued in this role after they have finished their course.
- Careers guidance and support for students are good. Most learners have a very clear idea of how they want their career to progress; they have plans to gain employment, go to university, start a course at the next level or start an apprenticeship. Staff support and enable learners to develop the communication skills, attitudes and professional approach that will help them to do this.
- Parents and carers value highly the care, guidance and support that students at the college receive. These help students develop their confidence and resilience, as well as their skills for work and vocational skills. Teachers provide parents and carers with relevant and timely feedback about the progress that students are making.
- Apprentices do not yet know enough about British values and how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Assessors introduce these topics at the start of their course, but they do not develop apprentices' understanding further during training or assessment.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Students at BCA make good progress towards achieving their qualifications and personal learning goals from their starting points. They develop very good practical skills for their chosen subject and skills for work, such as reliability, attendance and teamwork. As a result, the vast majority move on to employment, higher levels of learning or apprenticeships. However, the most able students do not make the full progress of which they are capable and a small minority of students are not yet meeting their target grades.
- Students for whom the college receives high-needs funding make good progress in

achieving vocational qualifications and their personal learning goals.

- Adult students achieve their qualifications at a high rate, which is slightly higher than younger students on study programmes.
- Apprentices in the current year are making much improved progress compared to the previous academic year, and most are now on target to complete their qualification within the planned timescale. In previous years, the proportion of apprentices who achieved their qualifications was too low.
- Students produce written and practical work of a good standard. As a result of teaching and training from well-qualified and experienced teachers, students learn to work within industry timescales and set themselves targets for improvement. For example, horse management students learn to muck out stables and prepare horses for riding to a high standard, prior to developing these skills further on external work-experience placements. Floristry apprentices produce very high-quality table decorations and window displays from their own designs, to industry standards and timescales.
- Students develop the English and mathematics skills that are relevant to their subject very well. Students' achievement of grade C or above in GCSE English resits is good; about half of the students who resit their GCSE English examination achieve a grade C or above. Too few students achieve GCSE mathematics qualifications at grade C or above and functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. However, students on courses for these qualifications in the current year are making more rapid progress than in previous years as a result of changes that leaders and managers have made to the teaching and assessment of these subjects.
- Apprentices make slow progress with achieving functional skills qualifications in mathematics as teachers rely too heavily on apprentices completing practice papers. Teachers do not identify accurately what elements of mathematics apprentices need to develop and plan learning accordingly.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The college provides study programmes in a wide range of land-based subjects and across a range of other subjects, such as sport, public services and creative arts. Students study from entry level up to level 3 with progression to higher education, and apprenticeships possible in the majority of subjects. There are currently 1,121 students on study programmes.
- Most teachers use the information they have about students' prior learning and progress on their course effectively to plan and teach lessons that help students make good progress. Consequently, most students produce work of a good standard and develop very good practical skills. Teachers reinforce learning through the use of vibrant, subject-relevant displays in classrooms.
- Students develop good skills for work, such as team working, problem-solving and working safely, through a range of activities including routine duties on college commercial units. Students make good links between their practical work, learning in theory lessons and work-experience placements. For example, animal management

students linked infection control procedures in a veterinary practice to their hygiene procedures during animal duties at college.

- Students develop and use their mathematical skills accurately and confidently in vocational subject lessons. For example, in animal management level 3 learners calculated correctly the surface area of epithelium to compare structure, function and efficiency of nasal cavities in different species. Creative arts students calculated the percentage of professional fees that could be allocated for their time and what percentages needed to be allocated to materials and other costs. However, the majority of GCSE mathematics lessons lack pace and teachers do not set tasks that enable students to progress quickly enough or to improve the specific skills they have yet to master.
- Students use technical language related to their subject area accurately and confidently. For example, media and performing arts students critique their work and work of other artists and recognise how this supports their progression to employment. As a result, students are well prepared for the world of work linked to their subject.
- Students have a very good understanding of the world in which they live and work. They know what skills they need to develop to live and work in modern Britain. Students use this knowledge well to support their learning and career aspirations. For example, public services students discussed confidently the impact of Britain leaving the European Union on employment opportunities in Ireland. Performing arts students created dramatic performances influenced by human rights in a historical and current political context.
- Students receive very good careers advice and guidance from teachers and external agencies, which help them to move on to employment or further learning. Students use the college careers service well, receive informative careers presentations and attend careers fairs. The majority of students have a realistic plan of their next steps.
- Most students know how to work safely and maintain their physical and emotional well-being. They can apply this knowledge to working in their subject area and identify relevant health and well-being concerns such as post-traumatic stress disorder in public services, or personal weight reduction in order to ride a range of horses in horse care. Students use specialist equipment, tools and chemicals safely and can describe accurately the risks associated with the use of machinery or wearing scarves when working with horses.
- Teachers' monitoring of students' progress and target-setting to help them improve is not yet effective. A minority of students are not yet achieving the grades of which they are capable, particularly the most able. Teachers' targets for students focus too often on what students have to do to pass rather than how they can develop their knowledge and skills further and achieve higher grades in future assignments. In too many cases, teachers take too long to assess students' work, which means they do not benefit quickly enough from the feedback that teachers give them.
- A few theory and practical lessons lack sufficient pace to enable all students to make good progress. As a result of limited planning and inconsistent checks of learning by teachers, students do not know how much progress they have made in a lesson and they struggle to recall knowledge and apply understanding in subsequent lessons.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- The college currently has 85 adult students on a wide range of full-time courses and on specialist, part-time courses for independence and employment skills. Most adult students are on full-time courses in animal care, floristry and motor vehicle. A few are on courses in countryside, horse care, public services and horticulture.
- Managers have a thorough knowledge of the local labour market and community needs. They have established effective partnerships with community groups, local authorities, employers and Jobcentre Plus to ensure that courses meet local skills needs. This enables most adult students to gain relevant skills and knowledge that improve their chances of securing employment, or enable them to become more effective in their existing job roles and personal lives.
- Teachers are well qualified and they share their good subject knowledge to enthuse students about their subject. They use questioning well to check how much students have learned and provide good oral feedback to help students improve. In the large proportion of lessons, teachers prepare well to ensure that students make good progress, using a variety of relevant activities to enable all students to participate. Students on courses for employment skills develop these skills very well. Those on vocational courses develop and/or improve their subject skills to a high level.
- Students know what progress they are making with their English and mathematics skills. For example, students set their own targets for improvement when planning, preparing and constructing a design for a floral window display; they are able to measure the area accurately, complete costings and label floral designs to industry standards using very good presentation skills. In horticulture, students are excited at the end result when using a laser spirit level to measure spacing between posts and identifying how perpendicular they are when building a perimeter fence for a tree nursery. Adults on the specialist course for independent living learn to measure and weigh ingredients accurately when preparing meals for themselves and their peers.
- Students who fall behind with their work are supported well by their tutors. They are challenged appropriately by staff to ensure that they make more rapid progress. Teachers use progress monitoring systems well to identify students who are not making good progress. Staff support students with additional tutorials and workshops to help them achieve their learning goals.
- Students on specialist programmes benefit from very good teaching and coaching which enable them to develop new skills such as cooking meals and baking cakes, helping them to develop independent living skills. Teachers assist them to set personal learning goals which, through well-planned teaching, they achieve.
- Adult students with a learning difficulty or disability on full-time courses achieve their qualifications at a higher rate than younger students. Good advice and guidance at the start of the course and during their course prepare students well for their next steps. Most students are on courses at a level which they find challenging and they make good progress. They are punctual and their attendance at lessons is good.
- Students are not developing good attitudes to learning and work consistently. For example, a minority of students wear hats and coats in the classroom. Students become too warm in the lesson and this slows the pace of learning. Students do not always come

to lessons prepared. This is not always challenged by staff to ensure that students are ready to learn and prepared for the world of work.

- In a small minority of lessons, particularly on full-time courses, teachers do not enable students to reach their full potential. For example, a student wished to recall and use the Latin names of animals and insects but the tutor discouraged them and asked them to use the common name.

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- The college offers apprenticeships in horticulture, motor vehicle, horse care and floristry. Most apprentices are on intermediate-level qualifications in horticulture and motor vehicle. The majority of apprentices are aged 16 to 18.
- Too few apprentices achieve their qualifications and this proportion has declined over the past three years. However, as a result of recent interventions by senior leaders and managers, current apprentices are making significantly improved progress and none have exceeded their planned programme end date this academic year.
- Teachers and assessors do not link work, college and assessment elements of the apprenticeship well to provide a coherent apprenticeship experience that enables apprentices to make rapid progress. Assessors make insufficient links between theory and practice, limiting apprentices' opportunities to apply their knowledge to practical situations. Employers do not know what apprentices are doing in their college sessions, with the exception of florists who are involved actively in planning their apprentices' learning and providing flowers for class sessions.
- College-based teaching does not inspire and enthuse apprentices. Teachers do not plan tasks and activities that ensure apprentices develop their understanding of theory well and so apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers have good knowledge and technical expertise; however, they do not use apprentices' workplace experience well to illustrate or enliven lessons.
- Too much teaching and learning in horticulture lack relevance for apprentices, especially those at advanced level. They spend excessive time working on their portfolios and do not receive relevant training while they are at college. Intermediate green-keeping apprentices find too many classes lack relevance to their occupational role as teachers focus on training relevant for those on amenity horticulture courses.
- Apprentices develop very good skills in the workplace and make a valuable contribution to their employers' businesses. Apprentices working on golf courses become fully involved in grass maintenance and take responsibility for maintaining designated areas of the course. Employers ensure that apprentices work with experienced staff so they develop the skills they need to take on greater responsibility. They are well prepared to move on to higher-level training and employment and the majority gain promotion as a result.
- The few apprentices in floristry make very good progress both at work and at college. Teachers and assessors make good links between theory and practice to help apprentices produce floral designs of a high standard. For example, intermediate apprentices designed and produced imaginative table decorations, using white roses, which required a high level of skill.
- New procedures to assess apprentices' skills in English and mathematics and to identify those who may need extra help at the start of their course are thorough. Apprentices

complete trial periods to ensure their suitability for an apprenticeship and, where appropriate, staff offer alternative courses.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- The college currently has 123 students for whom they receive high-needs funding. Seventy-two are on full-time, vocational courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. Fifty-one are on specialist courses, mainly at entry level and level 1 for skills for independence and employment. The majority of high-needs funding comes from four local authorities in the region.
- Managers and staff have high expectations of their students and support them very well through bespoke learning programmes, developed in consultation with parents, carers and specialist support agencies. Managers have established productive partnerships with specialist agencies in areas such as autistic spectrum disorder and mental health, and cooperate closely with local authorities and social care services. These provide specialist support including behaviour management, language development and independence. Students and their families receive good advice and guidance from managers to support their smooth and successful transition to college.
- Support for students is very well planned and highly effective. Skilled, experienced teachers work very effectively with well-trained teaching assistants to ensure that students on specialist courses participate in activities as fully as they are able. As a result of the support they receive, students on full-time courses make very good progress with their qualifications. They develop essential study skills well and increase their confidence in their ability to learn more independently and work alongside their peers.
- Teachers help students on specialist courses to improve their English and mathematics skills. For example, they follow cookery recipes, read maps or follow workplace instructions. Students contribute to the college community and complete work-related experience in the college shop. The work they do helps to prepare them for their future. They develop skills such as confidence when serving customers, using the cash register appropriately and counting change back to customers.
- Knowledgeable specialist tutors help students develop their independent living skills through reading and identifying ingredients needed at the supermarket to enable them to prepare a simple meal that they can cook at home; this increases their independence. They go shopping to the supermarket and prepare to purchase ingredients for a meal. They find ingredients from numbered aisles and are able to identify best before dates on items and compare stock to ensure they are buying good-quality produce. Students develop their social skills when sitting together and eating the meals they prepare.
- The college provides students with a safe environment. Students know who to speak to if they have a problem. They work in an inclusive environment where they learn to respect each other, as well as their teachers and support staff. One student stated that they valued the freedom they had at college and appreciated the open spaces available to them as a learning environment.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130606
Type of provider	Specialist college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,864
Principal/CEO	Gillian May
Telephone number	01628 827486
Website	www.bca.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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	164	55	340	20	680	67	-	3
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	64	27	4	15	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	123							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal, 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 learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Richard Pemble, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Zimmerman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Marks	Ofsted Inspector
Jackie Shopland-Reed	Ofsted Inspector
Nicki Adams	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Pamphilon	Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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