

Leeds College of Building

General further education college

Inspection dates

28 November–1 December 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers do not use self-assessment or quality improvement processes well enough to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for students.
- Managers have not ensured that 16 to 19 study programmes meet the needs of students adequately.
- Too many students who complete level 1 study programmes do not progress to a higher level.
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds on study programmes do not achieve well enough.
- On study programmes, teachers do not take sufficient account of students' starting points when developing their theoretical understanding. As a result, students do not make rapid enough progress.
- Too many students on study programmes and apprentices do not achieve their English and mathematics qualifications.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of students on study programmes. As a result, students do not develop their personal, social and employability skills or their written English skills quickly enough.

The provider has the following strengths

- The very large majority of adult students achieve their qualifications and make good progress in developing the skills and behaviours needed for employment.
- Students and apprentices benefit from their teachers' and assessors' industry expertise and very high-quality resources. As a result, students and apprentices make good progress in developing practical skills.
- Leaders and managers respond very effectively to workforce needs and design learning programmes that meet the needs of a wide range of employers in the construction and civil engineering sectors.
- Teachers and other staff provide good support for students with identified additional learning needs and, as a result, these students make good progress and achieve well.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Leeds College of Building is a general further education college that specialises in construction education and training. The college provides adult learning, apprenticeships and 16 to 19 study programmes at all levels on three campuses in Leeds and through a number of national subcontractors. Most of the students are white males, with the majority coming from Leeds and surrounding areas. A significant proportion of students on full-time courses are recruited from areas of socio-economic disadvantage.
- The proportion of school leavers in Leeds gaining English and mathematics GCSE at grade 4 or above is just above the national average. Unemployment in Leeds is slightly lower than in the rest of the Yorkshire and Humber region, and the same rate as for England.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Be more critical in self-assessment and use the findings more effectively to improve the quality of provision by:
 - ensuring that teachers accurately evaluate the effectiveness of their courses
 - accurately evaluating the college's strengths and weaknesses
 - taking rapid and effective action to improve weaker areas
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders and managers to account for meeting key performance targets.
- Ensure that 16 to 19 study programmes fully meet the needs of students by:
 - enabling a high proportion of students to progress to construction-related training or apprenticeships
 - giving all students access to good work experience opportunities
 - reinforcing students' understanding of diversity, safeguarding, radicalisation and extremism throughout their programmes.
- Increase the proportion of level 1 students who progress to a higher level by:
 - providing clear and expected progression pathways for students to higher levels
 - providing careers guidance that enables students to make informed choices about their future careers
 - monitoring accurately the destinations of students who complete their courses so that managers are better informed about improvements that they need to make.
- Provide high-quality support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds on study programmes so that they achieve at least at the level of their peers.
- Train teachers to take account of students' starting points more effectively so that students make more rapid progress in developing their understanding of theoretical content.

- Increase the proportion of students on study programmes and apprentices who achieve their English and mathematics qualifications by:
 - ensuring that staff deliver English and mathematics lessons which challenge and engage students and apprentices and prepare them effectively for their examinations
 - improving the attendance of students in English and mathematics lessons so that it is at least at the college’s average.
- Ensure that teachers on study programmes develop students’ personal, social, employability and written English skills by:
 - reinforcing the importance of punctuality to students in all sessions
 - making sure that students arrive to lessons ready to learn and with the required equipment and attitude
 - enforcing the college’s attendance policy so that attendance targets are met
 - training all staff so that they develop students’ written English skills effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have articulated well their long-term vision for the college to be inclusive and meet local needs by providing education and training in construction and the built environment. However, leaders have not created a culture of high enough ambition for students. Although the large majority of apprentices and students studying at level 3 and above achieve well, this is not the case for many students following study programmes, a high proportion of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Leaders and managers have not sustained the good quality of provision found at the time of the previous inspection. The management of study programmes in particular requires improvement. Managers have not ensured that study programmes meet the needs of students. They do not do enough to ensure that a sufficiently high proportion of students on study programmes progress to construction-related training or apprenticeships, or have access to sufficiently good work experience.
- Leaders and managers do not collect sufficient information about what students do when they finish their study programmes. They are therefore unable to evaluate fully the impact that these programmes have on meeting students' learning and career progression needs. As a result, they do not make necessary improvements to the design and delivery of study programmes to meet the needs of students.
- Leaders and managers do not use self-assessment or quality improvement processes well enough to maintain a sufficiently accurate oversight of the quality of provision and students' progress and achievement. Managers do not ensure that all teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their courses or identify what needs to improve. Consequently, leaders, managers and governors overestimate the strengths of the college and have not recognised a number of key weaknesses.
- Leaders and managers do not hold teachers to account sufficiently for the quality of teaching, or their students' progress and achievement. Managers do not use the findings from lesson observations well enough to identify the actions that staff need to take to improve their teaching.
- Leaders and managers recognise that students' achievement in English and mathematics is a key weakness. They have implemented effectively a range of well-considered and appropriate strategies to improve the quality of provision. While there is clear evidence that the resulting actions are beginning to have a positive impact, leaders and managers recognise that they need to do more. Attendance remains too low in these subjects and too many students and apprentices do not achieve their GCSE or functional skills qualifications.
- Leaders and managers design training programmes that effectively meet the employment needs of a wide range of British construction and civil engineering firms. This is particularly the case for level 2 and level 3 study programmes, adult learning programmes and advanced-level apprenticeships programmes. Students and apprentices on these programmes have a wide range of opportunities to progress into higher-level apprenticeships or higher education. Leaders at the college are currently consulting with

over 30 employers, many large levy-paying businesses, to develop an apprenticeship standard for timber-framed building erection to meet local needs.

- Leaders and managers maintain very good links with employers and external agencies that work with adults. This enables adult students to gain relevant experience of work that develops their skills in working with a wide range of clients and benefits the local community.
- Leaders and managers ensure that subcontractors manage their programmes well. They have managed the expansion of subcontracted apprenticeship and adult learning programmes to meet the needs of employers effectively. Managers have also supported apprentices to complete their programmes after a previous provider's funding was terminated. Consequently, adult students and apprentices following programmes with subcontractors make good progress, and achievement rates on provision delivered by subcontractors are higher than for the college as a whole.
- Leaders and managers have introduced a good range of innovative training and development activities to enhance students' and apprentices' understanding of equality, diversity and British values. However, they have not done enough to ensure that staff use the high-quality resources and training activities well enough to reinforce these important topics with students. Consequently, too many students have a limited understanding about how these subjects relate to them in their work and everyday lives.

The governance of the provider

- Governors are very committed to the success of the college. They take their responsibilities seriously and bring a wide range of skills and experience to the board. They have supported and challenged leaders particularly well to steer the college through a planned, but challenging, financial deficit situation. They have achieved this while making ambitious improvements to the college's estate and infrastructure. Through robust planning and control and effective management of risk, the financial situation is now improving in line with targets set by governors.
- Governors receive and consider in-depth reports about the college's performance that leaders provide. These include analyses carried out by leaders about the performance of different groups of students. However, governors too readily accept the information as providing the full picture. As a result, they do not hold leaders fully to account for key weaknesses in the college's provision, including the failure to achieve key attendance and achievement targets.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Well-qualified and trained designated safeguarding officers provide a high level of appropriate support for managers, staff and governors. Managers' actions ensure that there is good practice in the college around the safeguarding of students.

- Arrangements for the referral of safeguarding concerns are clear, and are understood well by staff. Trained staff deal with incidents and concerns promptly and use their extensive links with specialist services to provide good support for students who need it. Secure and comprehensive records detail the actions taken, and designated staff use these well to plan staff training.
- Governors take their responsibility for the safeguarding of students seriously. They receive regular updates and monitor safeguarding incidents and concerns closely.
- Managers involve police anti-terrorism specialists in 'Prevent' duty training and briefings for staff. However, leaders do not do enough to ensure that all staff successfully promote students' understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders and managers ensure that health and safety have a high profile in workshops and learning activities. Students respond to this well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of students on study programmes and, in particular, the most able. Teachers do not take sufficient account of individual students' needs when enhancing their theoretical understanding. They do not set targets routinely for students to extend their personal, social and employability skills. Consequently, students do not know how well they are developing the skills that employers value highly.
- Too often on study programmes, teachers set work that is dull and repetitive and does not capture students' interest in the theoretical aspects of their programme. Teachers do not use questions well enough to deepen students' understanding or check students' progress thoroughly enough. Consequently, students do not progress as quickly as they should.
- Too few teachers on study programmes ensure that students develop their English skills well enough. Teachers do not develop students' ability to recognise mistakes in written work. Consequently, students continue to make the same mistakes. Too many teachers do not link the development of English skills to their vocational subjects. As a result, too many students do not improve their English knowledge, skills and confidence quickly enough. Teachers develop students' mathematics skills in practical lessons effectively.
- While teachers follow qualification assessment requirements accurately, teachers on study programmes, particularly on level 1 courses, do not provide useful feedback to help students make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers' feedback on the apprentices' portfolios is too often late and this slows apprentices' progress because it means that they are unsure as to what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers do not use progress reviews well enough so that students on study programmes know what they need to do to improve. For example, teachers give students deadlines to complete tasks for their course, but students do not receive enough support to develop the other skills that they need for future employment. Apprentices benefit from progress reviews with employers and teachers that provide useful feedback to help them improve their workplace skills.
- Students and apprentices benefit from their teachers' industry expertise and the very high-quality resources available which help them to develop accomplished practical skills. Teachers provide effective coaching and support for students and apprentices so that

they develop their practical skills and progress to more complex tasks as the programme progresses. For example, less experienced roofing apprentices are 'buddied' with the most able so that they can observe and practise skills, meaning that they develop new skills more quickly and safely.

- Trainers support and encourage apprentices effectively to make rapid progress and achieve at a high level. Most current apprentices are on track to complete their programmes in the planned time.
- On adult learning programmes, teachers set stimulating activities and challenge students through skilful questioning that develops students' understanding quickly. As a result, adult students make good progress and achieve their qualifications.
- Staff provide effective support for the college's increasing number of students with high needs. Teachers conduct effective initial assessments of students and enrol them on courses appropriate to their needs and abilities. Teachers use reviews and education, health and care plans effectively to organise and deliver lessons which take account of students' prior learning and meet their individual needs well. As a result, students with high needs make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Teachers and other staff provide good support for students with identified additional learning needs and, as a result, these students make good progress and achieve well. Students who receive additional support in English and mathematics lessons make good progress in lessons. Students with challenging behaviour receive effective pastoral support to help them with their learning and to stay on track.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Attendance is too low and below the college's target, particularly on study programmes and for adult students, and in English and mathematics lessons. While managers have implemented a range of strategies to improve attendance, these are yet to have sufficient impact.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of students on study programmes to develop the personal, social and employability skills that they will need for their future careers. Teachers do not address poor punctuality adequately. In too many lessons, students arrive late or without pens and paper. They are not ready to learn, and so disrupt activities and slow the pace of learning of their peers.
- Students' and apprentices' behaviour is good in most lessons and around the college. Most students enjoy their learning and show respect for each other and for their teachers. However, teachers do not set work that challenges students sufficiently. Consequently, too often students talk among themselves during lessons when they should be listening or working quietly, and this disrupts other students. This is particularly the case on level 1 study programmes and in English and mathematics lessons.
- Students benefit from a range of appropriate work-related activities. Most students on level 3 programmes carry out work experience placements that provide an important and developmental aspect to their learning. While most level 1 students participate in valuable work-related learning that includes visits to observe the current practice of a wide variety of employers, too few participate in external work experience placements.

- Most students benefit from comprehensive advice and guidance from staff and employers that helps them to choose the most appropriate course of study for their future job roles. Regular visiting speakers from industry ensure that students know their career options well. As a result, many students progress successfully on to their next steps. However, too few students on level 1 study programmes progress to the next level of learning or employment within the construction sector.
- The college recruits many students from disadvantaged backgrounds with a history of poor attainment at school. Teachers support these students well so that most develop their confidence and self-esteem. However, the proportion of these students achieving their qualification is below the college's average.
- Leaders have established useful induction materials which show students and apprentices how to keep themselves safe from the threats of radicalisation and extremism. However, staff do not develop students' and apprentices' understanding of these risks sufficiently.
- Students benefit from extensive enrichment programmes that help them to stay fit and healthy. The college has developed a wide range of sporting and fitness activities. It also has good links with a range of local agencies including those responsible for mental health. As a result, students have a good understanding of the causes of poor mental health, particularly among young males in the construction industry. Most students are able to recognise warning signs and know whom to contact should the need arise.
- Students and apprentices feel safe and have a good understanding of how to stay safe at work, particularly working in dangerous environments, such as when roofing. They know how to report any concerns that they have about their safety. Students and apprentices have an effective understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and social media.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- The proportion of students on study programmes who achieve their qualifications is too low, and has declined since the previous inspection. While the large majority of students successfully complete their core building and construction qualifications, not enough students achieve the English and mathematics qualifications that they need. Managers recognise the importance of increasing the proportion of students who achieve their English and mathematics qualifications, and have introduced a variety of strategies to address the poor results. Their actions, while showing small signs of early impact, have yet to improve students' results sufficiently.
- Too many students on level 1 study programmes who complete their qualifications do not progress onto courses at a higher level. Consequently, they leave the college without the essential skills that they need to gain employment in relevant industries. By the end of their studies, level 2 and level 3 students have gained the necessary skills to start employment in the building and construction sectors.
- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who constitute well over half the students on study programmes, do not achieve well enough. There are no other significant gaps in achievement between groups of students.

- Although the proportion of apprentices achieving their qualifications in the planned time declined in 2016/17, it remains well above the rate for similar providers. While apprentices at advanced and higher levels have good rates of timely completion, not enough intermediate-level apprentices achieve their qualifications within the planned time.
- Current apprentices and students are developing successfully the practical skills that they need for future employment. They take pride in work which they produce to a high standard. However, students on study programmes make less rapid progress in their theoretical understanding.
- Adult students make good progress and the very large majority achieve their qualifications.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Currently, there are around 860 students following study programmes in a range of areas in the construction industry. The largest areas are electrical installation, plumbing, carpentry and brickwork. Smaller numbers follow programmes in plastering, painting, decorating and tiling. A minority follow technical routes leading to advanced qualifications and higher education. The majority of students are on level 1 programmes.
- Since the previous inspection, students' achievement has declined and is now too low. While most students achieve their core qualification aim in construction or building, too few gain their functional skills qualifications or GCSEs in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not prepare and deliver activities which effectively enhance students' theoretical understanding of subjects. Too many teachers use similar types of tasks repeatedly and these often lack challenge. As a result, a minority of students become bored and disrupt the learning of others.
- Teachers provide students with opportunities to acquire appropriate mathematics skills in a relevant vocational context. However, teachers do not develop students' English skills to the same extent. As a result, students are making only slow progress in improving their verbal and written skills.
- Teachers focus too much on students achieving the main qualification aim and do not focus sufficiently on the development of other social and employability skills. For example, no targets are set for English and mathematics skill development, or personal and social skills. Too few of those students making slow progress or with poor attendance or punctuality are set targets to improve.
- While aspects such as diversity, safeguarding, radicalisation and extremism are covered well at induction, teachers do not revisit these topics sufficiently during lessons and tutorials to ensure that students' knowledge is continually refreshed and extended. As a result, not all students are confident in how to protect themselves and others from extremist views.

- The arrangements for work-related learning are appropriate, but too few students are currently benefiting from fully planned work experience. Students have a broad range of opportunities to develop and widen their understanding of the industry and potential careers, including industrial visits, visiting speakers, community projects and taking part in competitions. Students use these opportunities to practise their trade skills and develop wider employment skills such as communication, team-working and problem-solving. However, managers do not evaluate how well students on level 1 programmes use their experiences to develop their personal, social and employability skills so that they benefit fully from these opportunities.
- Teachers ensure that students make good progress in developing their practical skills. They use their considerable expertise and knowledge of their sectors, and effective questioning, to challenge and inspire students. Teachers make very effective use of realistic and industry-standard resources to contextualise learning. As a result, the standards of practical work in building crafts and services are often high.
- Advice and guidance are comprehensive, and the extended induction is helpful in ensuring that students are on an appropriate course. As a result, most students stay on their programmes. The programme of careers events coupled with the enrichment activities help students to understand the full range of employment or next steps options open to them.
- Students are safe and feel safe. They behave well, respect others and understand how to contribute to wider society by applying 'considerate construction' principles. For example, they understand the potential impact of large building sites in sensitive areas, such as alongside schools, hospitals and residential areas.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- There are around 400 adult students across all provision types, nearly half of whom are following full-time level 2 courses. Most of the other students are on short level 1 courses.
- Students make good progress on their programmes. They quickly develop industry-standard building services and construction skills, and complete their programmes within the planned timescale. The standard of students' work is good, and students take pride in producing finished work to a high standard.
- Staff work closely with organisations such as Jobcentre Plus and local employers to provide students with a range of work experience, including participation in local projects. This benefits the local community and aids students' development of construction skills in real work environments. For example, students who participated in construction work experience in a residential care home were able to work effectively with other trades, the residents and staff.
- Teachers skilfully challenge students to develop their theoretical understanding quickly. They use questioning effectively to extend students' understanding, and students successfully apply this understanding in their practical sessions. Teachers ensure that students know what they have to do to improve, and they develop students' communication skills and their ability to work with others. As a result, students improve the skills they need for work.

- Teachers develop adult students' English and mathematics skills well. Students are able to apply their skills successfully in both the classroom and workshop to complete written and practical tasks. As a result, the standard of students' English and mathematics shows improvement over time. For example, level 3 students are now able to use trigonometry equations correctly to calculate the pitch of a roof.
- Students feel safe and they know what to do if they feel unsafe or threatened. Students have a good understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and how to stay safe online. Managers enforce good health and safety practice to students and staff, and visitors to the college.
- On a small minority of courses, teachers take insufficient account of students' previous experience and skills when planning learning. Teachers on these courses do not set additional work effectively to enable the most-able students to develop their skills further. As a result, these students are not challenged sufficiently and do not progress as quickly as they could.
- While the majority of students progress to the next level of study or gain employment, not enough students progress from level 1 to level 2. Too many students on level 1 courses move into unrelated employment or remain unemployed.
- Too many teachers do not set high enough expectations about the importance of regular attendance. As a result, students' attendance is too low in too many programme areas.

Apprenticeships

Good

- There are nearly 1,400 apprentices at intermediate, higher and advanced levels. The college offers a wide range of apprenticeships, mainly in construction and building programmes. Subcontractors currently deliver just under a third of the provision. The provision meets the principles and statutory requirements of apprenticeships.
- The large majority of apprentices achieve well and a high proportion complete their programmes within the planned time. However, in the last year, achievement rates for apprentices have declined, although they remain well above those of similar providers. While the performance of higher-level apprentices is excellent, the performance of intermediate-level apprentices is too low. Students at subcontracted providers now perform better than those managed directly by the college.
- The performance of subcontractors is very good, with a high proportion of apprentices achieving their target qualification and progressing to higher-level learning, including degrees. The college significantly increased its subcontracted provision following the transfer of students from a large national provider. Managers strike an appropriate balance of scrutiny and support for subcontractors, visiting frequently to observe lessons, evaluate resources and discuss the provision with students.
- College managers have formed good partnerships with employers and subcontractors. Employers provide a good range of planned activity in the workplace. As a result, apprentices develop good technical skills that enable them to progress within their organisations and to higher-level qualifications. Trainers and managers provide employers with constructive and timely feedback on students' progress and attendance.
- Apprentices develop good practical skills, knowledge and employability skills. This includes the use of up-to-date digital software. They behave well and have a positive attitude to

work, attending punctually and beginning sessions ready to work. Employers value these characteristics as well as other skills in, for example, customer service, problem-solving and working in a team which apprentices develop through their programmes.

- The large majority of current apprentices are on track to complete their programmes in the planned time. Managers and trainers promote high standards and ambition among apprentices. Apprentices are strongly encouraged to pursue high grades in their technical certificates and the large majority achieve them. Some larger employers provide financial incentives for good performance, and the grades achieved by apprentices on technician programmes have proved crucial in securing entry to first-choice universities.
- Apprentices demonstrate safe working practices in the college and at work. Due to the increased number of apprentices from further afield, many attend the college for long block periods staying with families in the local area. Good safeguarding procedures ensure that students are safe and are aware of what to do if they have concerns about their welfare. However, apprentices' specific knowledge of the threats of radicalisation and extremism is underdeveloped.
- While teachers closely monitor apprentices' progress through a newly introduced electronic system, there are too many examples where apprentices' work is not marked quickly enough. As a result, too many apprentices do not receive timely feedback on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve, and this slows their progress.
- The achievement of functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics for apprentices who need these qualifications is too low.



Provider details

Unique reference number	130542
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of students	16+
Approximate number of all students over the previous full contract year	3,670
Principal/CEO	Ian Billyard
Telephone number	0113 222 6000
Website	www.lcb.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+
Total number of students (excluding apprenticeships)	497	184	157	190	208	20	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	267	173	416	423	16	99		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of students aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of students for which the provider receives high-needs funding	53							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	CG Assessments Shipley College Choice Training City of Westminster College EAS Mechanical College of North West London Salford City College Trafford College							

Information about this inspection

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

Inspection team

Richard Ronksley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Malcolm Fraser	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Deane	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Barry Dolan	Ofsted Inspector
Priscilla McGuire	Ofsted Inspector
David Baber	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Harrett	Ofsted Inspector
Charles Lewis	Ofsted Inspector

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M1 2WD

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