

Brentwood Community College

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates

10–12 July 2018

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Provision for learners with high needs	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet sufficiently good so that all students make the progress of which they are capable.
- Quality assurance arrangements are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the quality of the provision is consistently high.
- The curriculum offer requires further development so that it meets all the needs, interests and abilities of students who have high needs and ensures that they achieve their long-term goals and aspirations.
- Leaders do not receive sufficient independent challenge to hold them to account for improving the quality of the provision rapidly.
- Management information systems do not enable leaders, managers and staff to record or analyse accurately students' progress and achievements. Leaders do not have a clear overview of the progress that students make from their starting points and over time.
- Teachers do not use information about students at the start of their programmes effectively enough to plan study programmes and learning activities that meet individual students' needs and abilities fully.

The provider has the following strengths

- Students make very good progress in developing strategies to manage their own behaviour.
- All staff in the college promote an inclusive culture in which individual differences are respected and celebrated. Students are polite and respectful to staff, visitors and each other.
- Students benefit from high-quality resources and specialist support that help them to develop their practical skills successfully.
- Leaders and staff have developed effective partnerships with a number of external agencies, professional organisations and parents/carers. Arrangements support students sensitively and successfully during their time at the college and when they leave.
- Students develop highly effective personal and social skills in college and in the community.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Brentwood Community College is located in Sale, Greater Manchester. It was established in 2014 as a result of the local area special educational needs review for students aged over 19 who were progressing from the associated special school. It was registered formally as a company limited by guarantee and a specialist post-16 institution in 2016. The college provides education and support for students who have severe learning difficulties, profound learning difficulties and/or autism spectrum condition (ASC). Students' ability levels range from performance level three to entry level two.
- At the time of the inspection, 21 students attended the college. All of these were from the Trafford local authority area. They received funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers set clear and individualised targets that link to students' individual education, health and care (EHC) plans, are sufficiently challenging and help them to achieve their medium- and long-term goals
 - teachers plan lessons and learning activities that take into account students' needs, abilities and individual starting points, rather than task completion, and ensure that students make at least the progress of which they are capable
 - students develop their English and mathematical skills to ensure that they are able to apply these skills successfully and routinely when they are living independently and when they are in social situations.
- Establish robust quality-assurance arrangements so that leaders can evaluate accurately the quality of the provision and implement effective actions to ensure rapid improvements that they monitor regularly.
- Implement an effective and targeted curriculum offer that meets the needs and abilities of all students and sets high expectations across all aspects of students' learning.
- Ensure that management information systems are fit for purpose and provide accurate information on students' progress and achievements, both accredited and non-accredited.
- Implement effective governance/independent monitoring arrangements so that leaders are supported and challenged to improve the quality of the provision swiftly and implement a curriculum offer that meets all students' needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The college has experienced a significant change in its senior leadership team since it was established formally in 2016. The new headteacher was appointed in April 2017 and the head of college is very recently in post. Since their appointments, the new headteacher and senior team have identified a number of key actions that they need to take to ensure that the provision is of a high quality. However, they have not identified sufficiently all the weaknesses. Initiatives to address identified weaknesses have yet to demonstrate a long-term impact in improving the quality of the provision.
- Leaders have not structured their long-term plans for the college strategically enough so that they can monitor the progress and impact of new initiatives effectively over time. Their vision aims to promote students' transition to adulthood and to allow them to have meaningful and fulfilled lives. However, it is not yet clear how leaders will achieve the vision in the short, medium and longer terms to help to improve and build upon students' opportunities and independence in adulthood.
- Leaders do not separate the operation of the school and the college adequately enough to ensure a distinct demarcation between the two organisations. While leaders recognise fully that the college is a separate legal entity to the school, it is often unclear whether they are referring to the college or the school. Terminology is used inconsistently across the college, for example pupils and students, school and college. Parents and other external stakeholders view the college as an extension of the school. They do not appreciate fully the requirements and expectations of a post-19 provision.
- Leaders have introduced recently a new process for observing teaching, learning and assessment to help teachers develop and improve their practices. However, while there is evidence of some impact for a very small number of teachers, leaders have not yet had sufficient time to embed the process and to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are of a consistently high standard across the college. The process does not yet assess the working relationships between teachers, support staff and therapists, and the impact that they have collectively in lessons on the progress that students make. During the inspection, college observers made judgements about the quality of lessons broadly in line with those of the inspection team.
- The curriculum is too narrow and requires further development. It does not meet the long-term individual needs, abilities and aspirations of all students to ensure that they are challenged sufficiently to achieve what they are capable of in areas other than independence, and behavioural and communication skills. Leaders recognise that this is an area for improvement and are seeking advice from external sources to improve the curriculum offer.
- Quality improvement arrangements are not sufficiently developed to ensure that leaders, managers and governors understand accurately and fully the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They do not evaluate the quality of the provision rigorously enough. As a result, the self-evaluation report is too positive, and the quality improvement plan identifies areas for improvement that read as strengths in the self-evaluation report. The monitoring of quality-improvement actions does not identify and evaluate the impact that these actions are having on improving the quality of the provision.

- Leaders have implemented a new approach to performance management that is linked to their vision for the college. This includes a new approach to appraisal and support for staff. Evidence shows that the new process is supporting successfully a small number of staff to improve their performance. However, it is not yet embedded fully for all staff to ensure that their practices improve rapidly.
- All staff across the college promote an inclusive culture in which individual differences are respected, and where students work together successfully and harmoniously. Staff are role models for the students and are highly supportive of and show great care towards their students. As a result, students demonstrate respect and tolerance towards each other, staff and visitors.
- Leaders, managers and staff have developed effective partnerships with external agencies, professional organisations and parents/carers. Students are supported sensitively and successfully through these partnerships during their time at the college and are able to make informed decisions when it is time for them to move to the next stage of their learning and/or independence. Leaders are working currently with new partners to help students into supported employment and other work-related opportunities, but they have yet to integrate them fully into the provision.
- Leaders and managers use high-needs funding effectively to support students to overcome barriers to learning. For example, students benefit from access to high-quality resources, including assistive technology, a hydrotherapy pool, a sensory room and direct access to specialist staff such as a college speech and language therapist and a music therapist. Leaders ensure that students have access to other specialists according to their needs, for example physiotherapists and educational psychologists.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements require improvement.
- Governors are passionate about the college and its students. They have recently established link-governor arrangements to oversee particular aspects of the college such as leadership and management, teaching and learning, and finance. However, they do not understand sufficiently the provision for students aged over 19 who have high needs. As a result, they are unable to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the college and to challenge leaders effectively. The information that they receive about the college, including students' progress and achievements, is based on data and processes that are underdeveloped.
- College leaders recognise the urgent need to strengthen governance arrangements for the college to ensure an independent overview of the quality of the provision and to provide suitable challenge for them as leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Comprehensive systems are in place to keep students safe and to record any concerns or incidents promptly. Staff follow up concerns quickly and efficiently to ensure that they take appropriate action to ensure that students and their families receive the necessary support appropriate to the concern or disclosure. Leaders have established close working

relationships with a range of external organisations and agencies to support students and to keep them safe.

- Students keep themselves safe when working in practical sessions by identifying independently and wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment, and by following safety instructions closely.
- The college environment is secure. Students feel safe. They know what to do and to whom they can report concerns about their safety and/or how they are feeling. Detailed checks are in place for all visitors to the college. Lanyards identify whether a visitor has been subjected to an enhanced disclosure and barring check or not: green for those who have and red for those who have not. Staff challenge all visitors who are unaccompanied appropriately, regardless of the colour of their lanyard.
- Leaders, governors and staff receive appropriate training and updates on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are clear in their roles and the procedure for reporting any concerns or disclosures.
- Leaders follow safer recruitment practices. They check diligently the suitability of staff prior to their taking up posts at the college. Leaders and two governors have received appropriate training in safer recruitment practices.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too often students do not carry out sufficiently challenging work. This is because teachers are not using the information about the specific prior achievements of students to plan their next steps.
- Teachers do not assess students' ongoing progress sufficiently. Consequently, students make slow progress towards their personal targets. Teachers do not set work that builds on previous learning. They do not challenge students routinely to make greater efforts so that they make the best possible progress. Teachers do not provide feedback following assessment or reviews of students' EHC plans that helps students and their parents/carers to understand what they do successfully and how they can improve, particularly the skills they need to develop to achieve their targets. Teachers focus individual education plans (IEPs) on task completion, based on unit criteria from the accredited programme. They do not review how successfully students are developing their skills. Most students do not understand what progress they are making.
- Teachers do not help the most-able students to develop their written English and mathematical skills to the standards of which they are capable. Too few teachers plan their lessons to include English- and mathematics-related activities so that students develop their functional English and mathematical skills successfully. As a result, students do not consolidate and develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they will need in their adult life, for example counting coins and recognising change when paying for items in a supermarket.
- A small proportion of support staff do not have high enough expectations of students in lessons. They are too quick to answer or guide a student on a task that they may have been able to achieve successfully with less intervention and support. Consequently, these students are oversupported or insufficiently challenged, and therefore do not make the progress at a rate that is in keeping with their needs and abilities.

- Staff benefit from a wide range of professional-development activities. In particular, an annual programme of activities ensures that teaching staff have an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of a range of support interventions for their students that are often delivered by specialists within the college. As a result, staff are able to work together effectively outside lessons to support students and to help them to develop acceptable behaviours and use the therapies that they receive effectively.
- Teachers support students very effectively to develop their practical skills through a range of activities such as art and craft therapy, garden maintenance, digging up potatoes to use in the kitchen, car valeting and the care of hens. Students enjoy these lessons and learn how to use equipment to complete tasks to an appropriate standard.
- Managers and staff provide good specialist support to meet students' individual needs. As a result, students develop their communication and social-interaction skills effectively, which help them to prepare to move on to a range of social-care settings. They develop and implement successfully learning and support strategies through soundboards, communication mats, 'switches', specific techniques for students with ASC and sensory learning. Teachers support students to complete tasks using useful and appropriate picture-exchange systems. For example, during the enterprise car-wash activity, they guided students through the specific tasks of washing and rinsing cars and vacuuming car interiors by exchanging a series of pictures of these activities with the students. In a cooking lesson, students followed the pictures to select their ingredients and fold their cake mixture.
- Teachers and support staff enable students to carry out a wide range of everyday tasks that help them to develop their organisational skills and to become more independent. For example, students learn how to prepare and cook basic meals, complete everyday cleaning skills, cook, shop and budget, and travel within the community. This helps them to prepare for adult life.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Students' behaviour is very good. Students work collaboratively and effectively with staff and their peers. They follow instructions carefully, which enables them to cooperate with each other, participate in all activities and prepare themselves for adult life, particularly in social-care settings. Staff support students with complex needs very successfully to manage their own behaviour and to minimise challenging situations. Teachers and support staff follow behaviour and support plans closely to ensure that they use effective strategies to de-escalate situations and to support students who have very complex needs to prepare for adulthood.
- Staff set clear expectations about safe working practices in their activities. Students are safe in lessons, during movement around the campus and within the community. Risk assessments for students are in place, with clear reference to individual strategies to support health and behavioural needs. Students work safely during practical activities. For example, students follow safe working practices when using electrical and water equipment together in car valeting, clearing away slippages and using knives in cooking lessons, navigating a trolley around a busy supermarket, and using gardening equipment and water hoses during weeding and planting. They remember independently that they must put on appropriate personal protective equipment at the start of lessons, such as

gloves and aprons.

- Students develop their social and communication skills successfully. Most students enjoy a wide range of activities that extend their social interaction with peers and the wider community. These activities help students to develop their confidence to engage and communicate with people they do not know. Further practical activities support students to develop their interaction with each other and staff, such as in team sports. All students participate in additional charitable enterprises, for example litter picking and 'Comic Relief' day. They benefit from engaging in drama groups and productions, college 'proms', discos and annual fairs. They have staged recently a successful performance of 'Annie the Musical'.
- Staff support students effectively to make healthy lifestyle choices and to improve their well-being. All students participate in extra-curricular activities such as the 'daily mile' walk around the campus track, bike riding, swimming and dance/Zumba sessions. Staff support students to make shopping trips to local supermarkets to buy healthy food for lunches that they prepare in their independent-living lessons.
- A small number of students benefit from work-experience placements in a large supermarket and a local park. These students develop a positive attitude to work and demonstrate appropriate behaviours in the workplace. They respond appropriately to instructions and are able to work effectively, both independently and in teams. Students working at a local supermarket demonstrate the accurate way to stack poultry and meat shelves using correct stock-rotation methods. They use their initiative to answer customers' questions correctly and, over time, have improved their self-assurance to work closely with the store supervisor.
- Managers' interventions to improve students' punctuality and attendance have been effective. Students are punctual to lessons and attendance is now good.
- Students and their parents receive effective impartial information, advice and guidance from staff, a specialist careers adviser and the local authority before starting their programmes at the college. This ensures that specialist support for individual students is aligned closely to their personal health, care and behavioural needs. Effective transition arrangements from the associated school into the college ensure that students settle in quickly to life at the college with minimum disruption or anxiety. Staff provide students, parents and social workers with helpful guidance at the start of their programme in relation to the facilities and resources available. During the building of the new school and college campus, staff made arrangements for students to visit the site regularly to ensure that they were familiar with the new location and understood fully why they were moving to a different building.
- Students who have less complex needs make slow progress in developing their English and mathematical knowledge and skills. Too few students practise applying these skills in the completion of practical tasks. For example, during learning activities teachers do not encourage students to count the number of plants that are required for planting in a particular area or calculate the number of survey responses. Outcomes for mathematics are not identified routinely in EHC plans. Too often, staff complete students' reflections in their workbooks for them. As a result, staff are not supporting the most-able students to extend their skills as well as they could to prepare them even better for adult life.
- Teachers do not use information about students at the start of their programmes purposefully enough to design individualised study programmes that meet students'

personal needs fully. Parents value the opportunities to undertake transition and induction activities at the college and appreciate the high levels of personal support that students receive. However, staff place all students on the same vocational programme and all students complete the same units and tasks at the same time, despite personal EHC plan targets and aspirations. As a result, a small proportion of students do not develop realistic plans and the skills required for their future lives and work opportunities.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Targets in college IEPs do not link directly to outcomes in students' EHC plans. They are too broad to help students to make the individual progress that matches their needs and abilities, and often focus too much on completing tasks. As a result, students do not routinely make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not evaluate the progress that students make towards their personal and vocational targets sufficiently. They do not use assessment information precisely enough during progress reviews to identify students' next steps in learning and to move learning on at a pace that is appropriate for each student.
- The arrangements for measuring students' progress from their starting points require improvement. Progress recording and monitoring lack cohesion and consistency across the different aspects of students' study programmes. This fragmented approach to the recording and monitoring of students' progress means that leaders and teachers are unable to identify quickly and easily how successfully students are progressing overall and the extent of their knowledge and skills development over time. Inspectors were unable to verify the college's own data during the inspection, which, from the inspection findings, was too positive. Staff across the college do not monitor students' performance regularly enough.
- Students develop skills that support them to gain independence. Parents are able to describe articulately what students can do now that they were unable to do when they started at the college. For example, at home students undertake activities regularly such as cooking, making their own sandwiches and coffee, completing basic laundry tasks, washing the car and attempting some 'do-it-yourself' tasks such as painting a window. As a result, parents no longer do these tasks for them.
- Students' destinations are managed carefully and sensitively to ensure that students move to the most appropriate next steps that meet their needs. Staff work closely with parents and external agencies, including a careers adviser and key specialists from the local authority, to support students in their transition process. For the very small number of students who are capable of achieving supported employment or continuing with work experience, staff work successfully with employers to provide these opportunities.
- Students enjoy attending the college. They continue to develop in confidence and self-assurance, and become more resilient as a result of the skilled behavioural support across all their activities. Those who attend work placements develop the skills that they will need to gain paid employment or volunteering positions in the future.

Provider details

Unique reference number	142914
Type of provider	Independent specialist college
Age range of learners	19 to 25
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	14
Headteacher	Judith Lomas
Telephone number	0161 905 2371
Website	www.brentwoodschool-trafford.co.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+
	–	21	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	–	–		
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	21							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

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

Suzanne Wainwright, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Her Majesty's Inspector

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