

Inspection of Lancaster and Morecambe College

Inspection dates: 3–6 March 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Lancaster and Morecambe College is a small general further education college, situated on the edge of a largely rural area. The college serves the communities of north Lancashire, south Cumbria, the city of Lancaster and the seaside resort of Morecambe. The college provides a wide range of vocational post-16 education and training. This includes educational programmes for young people, traineeships, adult learning, apprenticeships and provision for learners with high needs. There are a small number of 14- to 16-year-olds who are electively home educated that attend programmes at the college. The college offers a programme for school pupils aged between 14 and 16. There are 48 pupils on this programme. Around half of the learners are aged 16 to 18 and study on full-time courses. The remaining half of learners are adults, mostly studying on part-time courses. Currently, there are 664 apprentices on apprenticeship programmes.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Leaders and staff set high expectations for learners' and apprentices' behaviour. We observed learners and apprentices behaving respectfully during the inspection. They told us that they know the expected behaviours of the industries that they work in, or plan to work in. Good behaviour and respectful relationships between staff and learners and apprentices create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

Learners on education programmes for young people feel that they are treated like adults. They are particularly grateful for the extra support that their tutors give them. Learners said that their tutors are always on hand to help them. They really appreciate the subject knowledge that their tutors have and how they help learners to understand how theory relates to their practical work.

Learners on adult learning programmes brim with enthusiasm about their learning. They feel very well supported by their tutors and they appreciate the flexibility that allows them to balance their learning with family life. Learners say that they have fallen in love with learning, all over again. They feel that their learning programmes help them to achieve their full potential.

Apprentices enjoy their off-the-job training sessions. They can easily link what they learn in these sessions to what they do in their workplace. This helps them to develop and hone their skills to industry standards.

Learners who have high needs demonstrate good behaviour and enjoy calm learning environments. However, they do not achieve as well as they should.

Tutors and advisers know and care about their apprentices and learners. Apprentices and learners speak highly of staff and their learning experiences. They value their tutors' and advisers' industry experience.

Learners and apprentices feel safe in college and in the workplace. They talk about the importance of health and safety practices in the workplace. For example, carpentry and joinery apprentices understand the importance of wearing ear defenders at work due to the noise levels of power tools.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have created a clear vision for the college. They have focused on delivering an inclusive curriculum that meets employers', learners' and apprentices' needs. Leaders and managers have reshaped many elements of the curriculum offer, including the order in which the curriculum is taught. For example, the level 2 hospitality course has been withdrawn as it did not fully prepare learners for the workplace. It has been replaced with the level 2 apprenticeship in hospitality and catering, which is preparing learners effectively for a career in the industry. In hair and beauty, leaders and managers have ensured that the curriculum has been designed with a commercial element. This is so that learners have appropriate work

placements in commercial salons. Leaders and managers have introduced the 'Aspire' programme to engage young people with learning. The course is designed to build confidence and motivate learners who may not otherwise have been involved in education, employment or training.

The principal and senior leadership team have established strong and sustainable relationships with a wide range of community organisations and leaders. They work effectively and creatively together. Their aim is to improve the current and future educational opportunities for learners and apprentices across a wide geographical area. The college is a strategic partner in the Eden Project North. This project is driving a whole-education system change across the area. The college has established itself at the centre of this change.

Tutors use a range of assessment activities to identify gaps in learners' and apprentices' knowledge and to inform the curriculum. For example, in childcare tutors use starter activities, practice papers and practice evidence portfolio sessions as ways in which they can help learners to remember and recall their learning. However, this is not the case for learners with high needs. For example, these learners move on to new topics without consolidating their learning. As a result, they do not always remember what they have learned and, consequently, have gaps in their knowledge.

Learners and apprentices work well together with their employers, peers and their tutors. Consequently, they effectively develop skills such as confidence, resilience, patience, communication and independence. Learners develop an understanding of living in a diverse community and appreciate and understand each other's differences.

Teachers do not effectively record the progress of learners with high needs against their education, health and care (EHC) plan outcomes. This means that teachers do not always identify what skills, knowledge and behaviours learners have consolidated. Learners with high needs do not have specific work placement goals to help them develop and increase the number of tasks and activities that they can master during their work placement. A few learners with high needs, on internal work placements, are not suitably challenged to develop new skills or complete more-complex tasks.

Leaders and managers ensure that learners and apprentices benefit from a broad range of activities to complement their programme and develop their skills. Activities include overseas trips, gallery visits, university visits, masterclasses and industry visits. Apprentices and learners benefit from working on live, community projects. For example, art and design learners on 'Aspire' pathways created 'the beautiful back alleys' project which brightens up run-down areas in Morecambe. High needs learners in creative arts and learners in digital media have collaborated to create short audio-visual clips on the theme of mental health for a local mental health project.

Tutors and managers ensure that learners and apprentices receive effective and skilful support that helps learners overcome and deal with personal difficulties such as mental health issues, anger management and low self-esteem. Several learners said that this

support, along with the 'tackling inactivity' programme, has enabled them to stay on their course and succeed. Learners told inspectors that this has helped them to deal with, for example, their anger, lack of confidence and anxiety issues.

Leaders and managers have focused on strategies to improve attendance and punctuality. The introduction of pastoral mentors has supported learners who have become disengaged from attending college. Individualised attendance targets are set for learners and apprentices, which encourage them to attend classes when otherwise they would have been absent. Consequently, learners' and apprentices' attendance is now high and their punctuality has improved in the majority of sessions. Rigorous monitoring of attendance has resulted in improvements in attendance and punctuality, but pockets of poor attendance across a few programmes stubbornly remain.

Managers and tutors skilfully incorporate careers advice and guidance into the curriculum. The majority of learners and apprentices understand the wide range of next steps, including further education, higher education and the employment opportunities, available to them. Learners talked positively about their learning experiences and career aspirations. For example, learners on hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes benefit from visits from external speakers who talk to them about international opportunities, such as working on cruise ships. All current adult learners studying on access to higher education programmes have offers of university places, including at prestigious universities. However, apprentices and learners on 'Aspire' programmes are less clear about their longer-term career goals. They have not received sufficient high-quality careers advice and guidance to support them in future career choices.

Governors are fully informed about the quality of education which learners and apprentices receive. They frequently monitor the planned improvements to courses with a notice to improve. Governors receive monthly progress reports. They attend assessment boards and operational meetings to ensure that they are fully briefed and aware of the challenges within the college. They skilfully challenge leaders and managers and hold them to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have implemented appropriate safeguarding processes and have taken effective measures to promote the safeguarding of learners.

The vast majority of learners have a basic awareness of the threats of radicalisation and extremism, but this is limited to terrorist acts. Learners across the college have a good understanding of safeguarding-related issues such as county lines criminality.

Leaders and managers have nurtured effective relationships with local schools and support a small number of 14- to 16-year-old learners to study on vocational qualifications which they could not otherwise have accessed. Inspectors are

reassured that there are adequate safeguarding arrangements in place for these learners.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that the recording of the progress of learners with high needs, against their EHC plan outcomes, effectively identifies what skills, knowledge and behaviours they have consolidated. Consider and plan for what learners still need to learn to ensure that they are ready for their next steps.
- Further improve attendance and punctuality so that learners on all programmes attend regularly, complete their programmes and develop the skills required for employment.
- Ensure that apprentices and learners on 'Aspire' programmes receive timely and up-to-date relevant careers advice and guidance so that they can make decisions on their next steps.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130737
Address	Morecambe Road Lancaster Lancashire LA1 2TY
Contact number	01524 66215
Website	www.lmc.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Wes Johnson
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	13–16 March 2018
Main subcontractors	Lancaster Training Services Lancashire Football Association Skills Network Piccadilly Gardens

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Director of Performance, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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