

# Burleigh College

Interim visit report

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Jane Hughes, HMI
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<b>Address:</b>	Britannia House 1–11 Glenthorne Road W6 0LH

## Interim visit

### Context and focus of visit

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out 'interim visits' to further education and skills providers. Interim visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners and apprentices in this period, including learners with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below and the findings are based on discussions with leaders, managers, staff and learners.

### Information about the provider

Burleigh College is an independent learning provider based in west London. The college works primarily with unemployed adults referred by Jobcentre Plus (JCP). They also work with employed learners who want to improve their skills, particularly in their use of English. At the time of this visit 201 learners were studying courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), functional skills English and mathematics qualifications, traineeships and preparation for life, from entry level to level 2.

### **What actions are leaders taking to ensure that they provide an appropriate curriculum that responds to the reasonable needs of learners and stakeholders and adapts to changed circumstances?**

Leaders moved all teaching online during the national restrictions. The majority of learners continued their learning. However, a small number who did not have the digital capability or equipment left their course without completing.

Leaders say most learners prefer to learn remotely online, so they continue to offer the curriculum in this way. This allows learners who study at the same level of learning to work in small groups with each other. Leaders say the benefit is that learners progress quicker to the next level of learning. Learners only come to the college site to complete external assessments. However, a small number of learners remain cautious about attending the site and have not yet taken their examinations in topics such as reading and writing.

Leaders have adapted the curriculum to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Their sector work-based programmes are specific to areas in demand. For example, a group of learners completed a warehousing programme and, as a result, leaders say many gained jobs in this area.

Managers carry out observations of online lessons and listen to pre-recorded sessions. Through this activity they have identified that tutors use questioning strategies more effectively than they previously did to check learners' understanding of topics. They also say tutors from different areas work closer together to support each other and share best practice because there is more flexibility in the timetable.

Employability tutors attend online classes to talk to learners about progression options and job opportunities. They arrange external talks to learners from a local job agency and prepare learners to apply for a range of job roles. Managers from the job agency state that they have a positive relationship with staff at the college. They feel staff put forward suitable and well-prepared candidates for their job roles. They have taken on many in industrial and driving roles, which are in high demand.

**What steps are leaders, managers and staff taking to ensure that the approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of learners?**

Tutors say they have had good support from managers to make the move to online teaching. Leaders have used their evaluations of online lessons to decide what further training staff need. These included further guidance on managing learners' behaviour in online lessons and using the full range of functionality of software programmes used to create online classrooms.

Managers and tutors say they have an improved oversight of the progress that learners make. They can see the outcome of all assessments as these are online. Tutors assess learners more often than previously, and subsequently learners receive feedback more quickly on work they have done. Learners can use an online assessment tool to check how well they are doing in English and mathematics.

Staff provide training for learners in how to use the technology they have for learning online. They use a range of strategies to help learners, such as 'how to' videos. Learners say they receive good guidance on using online learning technology. Staff respond to feedback from learners to adjust what they teach. For example, in employability training, following learner feedback they added information on psychometric tests used at interviews.

Since moving courses online, tutors have mostly been able to continue to teach their subjects with limited changes to the sequence of learning. In mathematics, tutors have left some topics, such as shape and space, to later in the programme as these are harder to teach online. In ESOL, tutors are looking for ways to better assess learners' writing skills. They find it hard to see how learners formulate sentences as they write and are unable to give 'in the moment' feedback.

Tutors say learners are more enthusiastic and committed to learning, and study more than might have been the case previously. Through learning online, learners are adept at finding extra resources for their studies.

**How are leaders ensuring that learners are safe and well informed about potential risks, including from online sources?**

Leaders have updated their safeguarding policies and procedures to focus more on learners' well-being and online safety. As a result, staff have extra training on these topics and learners receive specific information at their induction. Staff tell learners about the dangers of email scams related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as bogus track and trace emails asking learners for personal details.

Learners have access to an online classroom for health and well-being. They can access National Health Service guides on a range of topics such as mental health. Employability tutors complete health and well-being sessions with learners. Learners are aware of well-being information available to them. They say tutors are attentive, that they notice their moods and support them well.

Staff speak to learners on the telephone before they come to college for their examinations. They ensure that learners know the rules around handwashing, social-distancing and the wearing of face masks. They also talk about safe travel to college.

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