

Inspection of Blackpool and the Fylde College

Inspection dates: 9–12 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
<hr/>	
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	Requires improvement
Provision for students with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Information about this provider

Blackpool and The Fylde College is a large general and further education college in Lancashire. Blackpool is an area of high economic and social deprivation. The attainment of school leavers in Blackpool is below the national average.

The college offers a broad range of vocational routes from levels 1 to 6. The largest subject areas are in aerospace, maritime, automotive, building and construction, engineering, energy and health and social care. The college has five campuses. The main site is in Ashfield Road, and the Gateway Campus and the University Campus are all in Blackpool. The Lancashire Energy HQ is in Fylde and the Nautical Campus is in Fleetwood.

At the time of the inspection, there were 2,010 students on education programmes for young people. Of these students, more than half studied at level 3. There were 1,643 adults on education programmes. The majority of these studied at level 1 and 2, with around a third who studied at level 3. There were 1,388 on apprenticeship programmes. Of these apprentices, more than half studied at levels 2 and 3, with around a quarter who studied at level 6. There were 116 students who receive high needs funding.

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

Students and apprentices enjoy a wide range of courses that meet local and regional needs very well. This helps to ensure that most students progress to higher levels of study or work.

Adult education programmes often transform students' lives because they enable them to progress to further study or into employment. Students' confidence improves markedly because of the support they receive from tutors. For example, Access to Higher Education students develop the skills that they need to progress on to studying at university.

Most apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship. However, a significant minority of apprentices do not remain on their course or complete their apprenticeship programmes on time.

Students with high needs benefit from a broad range of opportunities to develop their social, communication and independence skills. For example, they develop oral communication skills through taking part in meetings as a student representative of the Student Union.

Students experience a wide range of enrichment opportunities, and, as a result, they develop higher-level interpersonal skills. Many students enjoy taking part in a range of community events, doing voluntary work or participating in competitions. These activities allow them to demonstrate that they are responsible and caring citizens.

Students and apprentices are proud to attend Blackpool and The Fylde College. Staff have high expectations of behaviour. Bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively. Most students and apprentices are motivated and attend college regularly.

Students and apprentices have suitable access to a carefully planned programme of careers information, advice and guidance. Students participate in a wide range of enrichment activities which build their confidence and resilience. For instance, they enjoy discussing and debating key issues relating to tolerance, diversity and respect, such as Black Lives Matters. Level 2 counselling students understand the importance of demonstrating professional behaviours and respect, how these link to the ethical framework for counselling professionals and the potential conflicts around disclosure.

The vast majority of students say they feel safe while at college. Students and apprentices demonstrate that they know how to work safely in college workshops, at work and online.

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

Leaders have a very clear rationale and vision to deliver education and training that prepares students for progression to employment, university or enhanced career prospects in their chosen sector. They offer a technical and vocational curriculum to prepare students effectively for their next steps.

Leaders work successfully with key partners to co-create the curriculum. This is to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of students and the wider local, regional and national economies. For example, the health and social care career academy works closely with the National Health Service, a regional university and the local authority to ensure that the curriculum meets the current and future needs of the sector.

Leaders ensure that most tutors and skill coaches are experienced with relevant and current industry knowledge. Staff benefit from effective professional development to improve their subject expertise and subject-specific teaching practice. They go into industry annually to update their technical skills and knowledge. Tutors and skills coaches use this development well to help students and apprentices to be prepared for the sector they wish to work in. For instance, maritime students understand how celestial navigation systems are used to determine latitude and longitude to work out global positioning if systems were to fail.

Leaders and staff engender a calm, respectful and inclusive environment, both inside and outside of the classroom, in most areas of the college. They encourage students and apprentices to develop the skills to be responsible, respectful citizens, modelling the professional behaviours they need to be successful in life and work.

Most tutors plan the curriculum in a logical way. For instance, adult students who study human physiology on access to nursing courses start by learning about cells in human biology, and then progress on to more complex topics such as the relationship between the skeleton and muscles, and how they work together in the body.

Most tutors provide frequent opportunities through discussion and group activities for students to practise and develop their skills, and to recall and develop their knowledge. For example, level 2 health and social care students develop a deep understanding of nutrition and how this affects the life chances of young people and adults.

Students and apprentices, including those who receive high needs funding, develop high-level vocational and technical skills which prepare them well for work. For example, high needs students on motorsport courses learn to understand and apply quadratic equations to calculate the speed of vehicles and to find ways to optimise the vehicle's performance.

Students benefit from an enhanced curriculum that improves their career prospects in most curriculum areas. For example, level 3 maritime cadets are able to study additional qualifications relating to firefighting and fire prevention on ships. Students on

information technology (IT) courses complete additional courses in Cloud computing to ensure that their learning is up to date.

Students and apprentices demonstrate and exemplify characteristics such as respect and positive attitudes which are aligned with fundamental British values. However, most students and apprentices do not have a good enough understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Most tutors set students challenging targets to achieve throughout their courses. However, a minority of tutors do not use targets consistently well in lessons in order to structure students' learning, for instance in English for Speakers of other Languages, IT and foundation learning. As a result, students do not always master the knowledge and skills to achieve their full potential.

The quality of feedback that students and apprentices receive is inconsistent. On most courses, students and apprentices value the feedback that they receive from their tutors and skills coaches. This helps them to improve their work. However, on a minority of courses and apprenticeships, tutors and skills coaches provide cursory feedback that is unhelpful. As a result, these students and apprentices do not know what they do well or how they can improve their work.

The vast majority of students and apprentices are motivated and have a positive attitude to their studies. They receive effective support from their tutors and skills coaches. This means they remain motivated and, in most cases, make at least their expected progress. Students who have high needs receive effective specialist support. Managers and tutors coordinate students' transition into college and specialist support well.

Most tutors provide effective advice and guidance to students and apprentices before the start of the course to ensure their course meets their career aims and personal aspirations. For instance, adult students on 'Build Up' employability programmes value the support they receive from their tutor. The support helps increase their confidence and motivation to be successful on their programme and in gaining future employment in the construction industry.

A small minority of tutors across the college do not check that students have sufficient understanding of the topic and, as a result, students' misconceptions are not rectified. For instance, in level 3 motor vehicle and employability programmes adult students do not always understand the underpinning knowledge to be successful in practical sessions.

Attendance on a minority of courses for young people and adults is too low. Even so, tutors focus well on the link between attendance and employability. This helps students recognise and value attendance as a key to having a successful career. Due to the effective work that tutors do around attendance, many of the most vulnerable students improve their levels of attendance. Attendance for apprentices is high.

There is too much inconsistency in the quality of education and training that different apprentices receive. The quality of education that apprentices on level 4 associate project manager and level 2 brickwork programmes receive requires improving. Conversely, training for nuclear level 6, project management level 6 and early years level 2 apprentices is very effective. Leaders have well-considered plans in place to make and sustain the necessary improvements.

Not all skills coaches routinely plan and coordinate on- and off-the job training for apprentices with their employers. This results in apprentices being unable to apply and master their learning while at work. Skills coaches do not routinely involve employers in progress reviews with apprentices. This results in too many employers not knowing what progress their apprentices make or how they can support them at work.

On level 6 nuclear and project management and level 2 early years, the curriculum is ordered in a way that apprentices can incrementally build their knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, level 2 early years apprentices learn about legislation and guidelines for the safeguarding, protection and welfare of babies and young children before they move on to topics such as understanding the stages of child development from birth to seven years.

Leadership and governance are effective. The chair and new board members have a wealth of experience as senior leaders in industry. Governors receive useful reports and information about curriculum areas. They provide senior leaders with the support and challenge they need to improve the quality of education and training for students and apprentices.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that the safeguarding and well-being of students and apprentices are a high priority. The designated senior leader has the appropriate training and experience to carry out the role effectively. There are well-developed links to external agencies to maintain an up-to-date knowledge of any localised safeguarding issues.

Leaders and managers carry out appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work at the college. Staff benefit from regular training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Tutors have had training on aspects such as sexual consent, peer-on-peer abuse and mental health awareness. Staff know how to keep students and apprentices safe and report any concerns they may have.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that they rapidly improve the consistency of the quality of education and training that apprentices receive so they all make good progress on their course irrespective of which apprenticeship they study.

- Leaders should ensure that all tutors set specific, measurable and challenging targets for students to achieve so they can aspire to master the knowledge and skills they need to develop their full potential.
- Leaders should ensure that all tutors and skills coaches provide helpful feedback so that students and apprentices know what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Skills coaches should ensure that they routinely involve employers in the review of their apprentices' progress.
- Leaders should ensure that they continue to monitor carefully the attendance of students and put appropriate interventions in place quickly when necessary.
- Leaders should ensure that all tutors and skills coaches have the necessary knowledge and are confident to teach students and apprentices on how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation and extremism.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130739
Address	Ashfield Road Bispham Blackpool Lancashire FY2 0HB
Contact number	01253 352352
Website	www.blackpool.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Bev Robinson
Provider type	General Further Education College
Date of previous inspection	7 October 2013
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Vice Principal, Quality and Curriculum, 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 visiting learning sessions, scrutinising students' and apprentices' work, seeking the views of students and apprentices, staff, employers and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Andrea Machell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kim Bleasdale	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Smart	Senior Her Majesty's Inspector
Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Gillett	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Crilly	Ofsted Inspector
Ruth Szolkowska	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Price	Ofsted Inspector
Tanya Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Greenhalgh	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Higginson	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Duncan	Ofsted Inspector
Alastair Mollon	Her Majesty's Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for students of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021