

Inspection of The Bournemouth and Poole College

Inspection dates: 11 to 14 January 2022

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

The Bournemouth and Poole College (the college) is a large general further education college. It is the largest provider of academic and vocational education in Dorset. Its campuses are located on three sites and the largest are at Lansdowne, Bournemouth and North Road, Poole. Approximately 97% of the curriculum provision is provided at these two sites. The other site at the Fulcrum at Tower Park, Poole is the centre for carpentry and joinery provision. Learners and apprentices are recruited primarily from across Dorset and Hampshire.

At the time of the inspection, 2,465 learners were studying on education programmes for young people (EPYP), 1,361 learners were on adult learning programmes, 1,698 apprentices were studying apprenticeship standards and frameworks, and 163 learners with high needs were studying on vocational and academic programmes. The college offers a wide range of provision, from pre-entry-level courses to higher education courses in 14 out of the 15 subject-sector areas. EPYP accounts for approximately 45% of the provision, apprenticeships 30%, and adult provision 25%. Provision for learners with high needs accounts for approximately 3% of the total provision and consists of around one third of learners

studying foundation programmes and two thirds studying on academic and vocational programmes.

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

Learners are enjoying studying at the college. Most are passionate about their subject and are enthusiastic about developing the skills and knowledge needed to be successful. Learners benefit from effective teaching that ensures they learn comprehensive new knowledge and skills. Learners are happy with the support that they receive from their teachers. This helps them to make good progress towards achieving their qualification and to make informed decisions regarding their future career.

Staff set high expectations for learner behaviour and attitudes, and most respond positively to the challenge. Learners settle quickly in lessons and work productively throughout. A strong ethos of mutual respect between staff and learners leads to a positive and calm atmosphere in well-structured lessons, and learners behave well around the campuses. Apprentices have a clear understanding of their expected behaviours and know how to conduct themselves appropriately in the workplace and at college. Learners describe the college as a place of safety, which has a positive culture where they feel safe from harassment and discrimination.

Learners are articulate and able to describe the new knowledge and skills they have developed, and that support their progression to their next steps. Learners explain how their confidence has grown because of the support they receive. For example, learners studying performing arts work effectively together to negotiate and share performance ideas and respond well to the responsibility placed on them by their teachers. They learn the professional behaviours expected of performers, such as self-discipline, punctuality, reliability and confidence, and they demonstrate these in their day-to-day work.

Learners develop their character and resilience with the support of their teachers. For example, in mathematics, learners are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and to attempt challenging questions and not to give up. Learners studying on arts courses benefit from a 'creative mindset' initiative, which supports their wider personal development and includes critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, ownership and risk-taking. On hospitality courses, staff place a strong focus on developing learners' resilience when working in high-pressure work environments, such as professional kitchens. Learners studying on foundation courses develop confidence in communicating with people they don't know, as well developing social relationships with peers.

Apprentices benefit from learning in well-resourced environments, such as those found in the engineering and hospitality departments, where they learn and practise their skills. Apprentices work well together, their conduct reflecting the professional and orderly behaviours expected in the workplace.

Learners develop a good understanding of healthy living, which is promoted well within the personal development tutorial programme. Learners benefit from good access to dedicated mental health support at college. Staff place a strong emphasis on the physical health of apprentices, particularly those studying engineering and construction trades.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers and members of the governing body have focused strongly and largely very successfully on improving all aspects of the provision. For example, they are well advanced in achieving their aim of consistently high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. However, leaders also recognise what they still need to improve.

Leaders have constructed a curriculum that is relevant to local and regional needs. Leaders engage with local partnerships and employer advisory boards and use market intelligence to inform their curriculum content. This ensures that any new programmes and the existing ones continue to be relevant to the needs of that sector. For example, the electrical engineering apprenticeship has been expanded to meet the current and predicted national shortfall in qualified personnel. Adult access programmes provide a direct pathway to shortage areas, such as in health and science.

The curriculum meets the needs of learners and employers. The curriculum offers progression pathways to further study or employment. Managers work in collaboration with a range of local organisations, such as Jobcentre Plus, to support widening participation and community learning. For example, most adult learners studying English for speakers of other languages or access programmes progress to further study. A few learners with high needs have progressed from foundation studies and are now studying level 2 science. Other such learners in bricklaying have an ambitious and clear pathway to becoming a skilled tradesperson in the building industry.

Leaders and managers of foundation learning programmes have not ensured that the progress made by all learners with high needs is recorded accurately. As a result, they cannot easily or readily identify how much progress learners have made from their starting points or whether they have made substantial and sustained progress. However, most learners with high needs do make reasonable progress in learning the content of the curriculum. Leaders recognise that this is an area for improvement and have recently implemented new systems. It is too early to see the impact of this.

Teachers are well qualified and have relevant industry experience, which they use well to enrich learning. In the process of teaching, learners develop an understanding of the most up-to-date techniques and knowledge. For example, learners studying beauty therapy are taught about new technologies and techniques, such as dermaplaning and nail art. Learners studying performing arts

are taught about developing the right mindset to work within the sector. Teachers break down key concepts well so that learners can develop fundamental knowledge in a subject area. As a result, most learners progress swiftly to more complex areas of the subject from first principles. For example, tutors have created schemes of learning in a variety of topics, such as mathematics in sustainability, employment and the home. These are then applied successfully in the context of other areas of the curriculum. Tutors widen chef apprentices' knowledge through supplementary questioning and checking during practical skills sessions. This enables them to successfully complete more complex and demanding tasks while in the workplace. However, in a small number of instances, teachers do not expect or ensure that all learners achieve deep learning or retain substantial knowledge.

Teachers provide frequent opportunities for learners to apply and practise what they have learned. Tutors use questioning effectively to ensure a deeper understanding of the subject. As a result, most learners can consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding and apply these in different scenarios. For example, health access learners explained how their understanding of muscles has deepened their knowledge of anatomy and physiotherapy. Learners studying performing arts enthusiastically try different aspects of the subject before deciding what to specialise in. Learners with high needs and those who study vocational studies are given additional time to practise skills and have developed their knowledge and confidence further.

Most learners progress to further study or employment. For example, learners studying applied science move on to higher education, while others take up employment or further education in other sectors. Most learners studying foundation learning achieve pre-vocational qualifications.

Tutors set high expectations for their learners, and the standard of most students' work is good. Learners are improving their grade profiles, with a substantial number of EPYP and access learners predicted to gain the grades required to access higher education. However, a substantial minority of learners studying on foundation courses spend time working towards a qualification irrespective of their assessed level of capability.

Most learners develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they require to be successful on their programmes. Learners can apply these new skills effectively in their work placements and are well prepared for their next steps. Beauty specialists consolidate their new skills in placements such as spas, hotels and cruise ships. However, learners studying on foundation courses have limited opportunities, partly due to COVID-19 restrictions, to access real work experiences to support their goals of securing voluntary or paid work on completion of their programmes. There are also limited opportunities for them to work outside their qualification to demonstrate that they are learning new skills and knowledge or that they are making progress year on year.

Governors are well qualified and experienced and now provide effective support and challenge to college leaders. They have played a key role in ensuring that the college has a clearly defined, achievable and measurable strategy in place that reflects current and potential future scenarios in the further education sector. Each governor plays an active link role for a particular aspect of the college's provision, such as safeguarding or student support.

Leaders and managers have implemented a comprehensive quality process that allows managers to assess and monitor the quality and impact of teaching on learners. In the process, they are identifying and tackling any further areas for improvement. However, the system for identifying new learners' starting points and prior learning is not being used effectively to ensure that teachers can use this information to monitor subsequent progress accurately. Leaders are aware that they could make better use of anonymous and confidential staff surveys to ensure that they identify all staff's views on the positive aspects of the provision and what can be done better. The college's two subcontractors are monitored closely by college managers and are expected to work to college standards, for example in respect of safeguarding arrangements. Subcontractor managers find this support of practical value.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The college is a place of safety for learners and there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the organisation. Designated and deputy safeguarding leads, together with support staff, are well trained. Staff attend mandatory annual training in safeguarding. Leads have direct and prompt access to a wide range of external professional support. College staff know their learners' circumstances very well. Staff's care and concern for learners are palpable. Managers maintain and closely monitor comprehensive narrative records of safeguarding issues and support actions for each learner. These records provide compelling evidence of prompt, very focused college-based and multi-agency interventions. Students do not start a work placement without formal on-site checks to ensure that the workplace is safe. Staff work hard to ensure that learners can move forward in their careers whatever their current circumstances and whatever has happened in their lives so far.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that initial assessment is used effectively by staff, so that all learners make substantial and sustained progress from their starting points.
- Ensure that learners with high needs on foundation programmes benefit from meaningful and high-quality real work experiences that help them to develop the skills they need to move on to employment or independent living.
- Ensure that staff surveys are used by leaders to drive up quality in teaching and learning.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130652
Address	North Road Poole Dorset BH14 0LS
Contact number	01202 747600
Website	www.thecollege.co.uk
Principal	Mr Philip Sayles
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	12 to 15 March 2019
	Rockley Park Rockley Point Poole BH15 4RW
Main subcontractors	EYC 2–4 Mulgrave Road Sutton Surrey SM2 6LE

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal for 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 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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