

# Inspection of Burnley College

Inspection dates:

23–26 November 2021

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

## Information about this provider

Burnley College is a large general further education college, situated in Burnley, Lancashire. Students are enrolled mainly from the town of Burnley and the surrounding area of East Lancashire. Burnley is a multicultural borough and government statistics indicate that Burnley has significant levels of deprivation. One of the largest sectors in Burnley is the advanced manufacturing and aerospace industries.

Burnley College offers sixth-form provision, courses for adults, an apprenticeship programme, known as Themis, and courses for students who have high needs. Around half of 16- to 18-year-old students and apprentices study at level 3, with around a third studying at level 2. The largest numbers are in care, construction, engineering and skills for life. In most areas, qualifications are available from entry level to level 3.

At the time of the inspection, there were 3,233 students on education programmes for young people, 1,267 on programmes for adults, 106 students who receive high needs funding and 1,000 apprentices.

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

Students and apprentices benefit from a very wide range of courses that meet local and regional needs well. This helps to ensure that the vast majority of students and apprentices progress to higher levels of study or to employment.

Adult education programmes provide excellent opportunities for adults who did not achieve well at school or who have previously had low aspirations. Adults make excellent progress on their courses.

Adult students' confidence improves significantly because of the support they receive from their tutors. For example, students on English courses develop the skills they need to competently write letters or complete job application forms. As a result, students on English and ESOL programmes improve their employment and career opportunities.

Most apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship. For example, level 2 carpentry apprentices skilfully fit doors and know the importance of accurate measurements so the door fits correctly. Employers say that apprentices become valued team members in the workplace.

Students with high needs benefit from a broad range of opportunities to develop their social, communication and independence skills. For example, students on 'connect' courses increase their confidence and independence so they can take part in social activities outside college. Students on advanced vocational programmes gain and develop the knowledge, technical skills and behaviours they need to be successful in their chosen careers.

Tutors and trainers provide a very caring learning environment. Students and apprentices feel welcome, valued and enjoy coming to college. They are respectful and polite to each other, their tutors and to support staff. Most students and apprentices attend college regularly, are punctual and come to college prepared to learn. However, attendance is too low for students on a minority of 'connect' and vocational programmes.

Most 16- to 18-year-old students benefit from a range of meaningful enrichment activities. For instance, plumbing students, as part of a WaterAid project, installed freshwater systems in Thailand. Apprentices in carpentry and joinery take part successfully in Worldskills competitions. Public service students gain additional qualifications in sport.

Most students receive effective careers advice and guidance. They are well informed about the different options for their next steps through contextualised tutorial sessions. For example, level three students are aware of the variety of courses they can access at a wide range of universities. However, students who have high needs and those on apprenticeship programmes are not always clear on how they are to achieve their long-term career aspirations.

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, in work and online.

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

Leaders have a clear rationale for the courses they offer. They work highly effectively with a range of key partners. This enables leaders to design a curriculum that meets local, regional and employers' needs. For example, managers work with local NHS trusts to identify local and national needs for healthcare professionals in nursing and midwifery.

Leaders ensure that adult courses meet the needs of some of the most disadvantaged and least likely learners to participate in education and training. Many adults have significant barriers to education and training or have been away from the job market for substantial periods of time. For instance, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses provide opportunities for students to develop the written and communication skills they need for work and in their personal lives.

Most tutors are experienced with relevant and current industry knowledge. Leaders ensure that most staff benefit from effective professional development. Leaders and managers do not ensure that new staff teaching in mathematics benefit from an effective induction and mentoring programme when they start at the college.

Most tutors and trainers teach the curriculum in a logical way, building well on previous learning. For example, in A-level sociology, the education, families and household units are taught first as these are relatable topics for students to understand. This helps build their knowledge and confidence early in the course.

Most students can recall previous learning and understand how key topics are linked. For example, access to nursing tutors include regular starter activities to check if students can recall and apply previously taught content. A-level English literature tutors use a range of strategies effectively in order to help students learn more and remember more throughout the course. For instance, they set homework using a broad range of literary texts to deepen students' knowledge of English literature.

Most students have a clear understanding of what they have learned and can apply it to more complex theory. For example, in A-level media, students study how a modern block buster film is marketed and why techniques such as montage editing or mid-shots are used to make a film seem exciting.

Most tutors use highly effective questioning to prompt debate so that students can link topics from prior learning. For instance, level 3 health and care students are able to discuss the spread and impact of Ebola and understand how it links to what they learned previously about hygiene standards and infection control.

Tutors and trainers support students and apprentices well to build their confidence and resilience as part of the curriculum. For instance, on access to higher education

programmes, students learn the communication skills they need to communicate effectively with colleagues and clients in the healthcare sector.

Students value highly the support they receive from staff at the college. For example, English students receive support for spoken English and help to practise their public speaking. As a result, they develop confidence and are well prepared for their examinations.

There is too much variability in the quality of education that students and apprentices receive. In a minority of instances, the curriculum is not ambitious enough for students' and apprentices' future aspirations. For example, tutors and trainers do not always use students' and apprentices' starting points to plan an ambitious and tailored curriculum.

Most tutors provide helpful feedback to help students improve their work. Tutors set clear targets for improvement, which allows students to progress the standard of their work over time. However, this is not consistent across all courses. For instance, students who have high needs receive feedback that is too positive and does not help them to secure improvement in their work.

A minority of trainers, for instance in manufacturing and chartered managers apprenticeships, do not plan the on- and off-the-job training in a well-considered way. This means apprentices are not able to apply what they learn in theory into practice while at work.

Governance is effective. Governors and senior leaders set high expectations for their staff, students and apprentices to achieve. Governors are experienced and well trained to complete their roles. They know the college well and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors provide sufficient challenge to senior leaders about the quality of education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is appropriately experienced and trained to carry out their role effectively. Managers ensure that all staff receive safeguarding and 'Prevent' training when they start work at the college, so they know how to keep students and apprentices safe.

Safeguarding managers ensure that they keep staff up to date with relevant local issues, such as child exploitation, spiking drinks and cybersecurity. They provide monthly updates, so students and apprentices are made aware of how to keep themselves safe.

Managers follow safe recruitment practices when they appoint new staff in order to ensure that they are suitably vetted before they commence employment.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders should ensure that they improve the consistency of quality of education that students and apprentices receive so they all make good progress from their starting points irrespective of which programme they study.
- Leaders should ensure that all tutors and trainers provide helpful feedback so that students and apprentices know what they have done well and how they can further improve their work.
- Leaders should continue to take prompt action to improve the attendance of students who are absent from their lessons too frequently.
- Leaders should ensure that all trainers plan the on- and off-the-job training in a well-considered way so that apprentices are able to apply what they learn in theory sessions in their jobs.
- Leaders should ensure that all new staff benefit from an effective induction and mentoring from an experienced tutor so they can develop their professional practice further.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130735
<b>Address</b>	Princess Way Burnley Lancashire BB12 0AN
<b>Contact number</b>	01282 733373
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.burnley.ac.uk">www.burnley.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Karen Buchanan
<b>Provider type</b>	General further education college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	May 2009
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, 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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