

# Inspection of Barnsley College

Inspection dates: 8 to 11 March 2022

## Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

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

## Information about this provider

Barnsley College is large general further education college with a number of sites in the town of Barnsley. The college's previous inspection was in November 2010 when it was judged to be outstanding.

At the time of this inspection, the college had 4,600 students on education programmes for young people, which equates to around two thirds of all further education students at the college. There were approximately 1,150 adult students, 1,200 apprentices and 361 students with high needs. In addition, the college provides full-time programmes for students aged 14 to 16; there were 33 students on these programmes.

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

Students work in a purposeful and very calm environment in all areas of the college and in lessons. Teachers have very high expectations for students and provide a high level of support and encouragement that enables most students to achieve well. Students enjoy working with peers who have similar interests to themselves in subjects in which they have a real interest.

Students on education programmes for young people benefit from gaining valuable insights into the world of work that prepares them well for their next steps. Staff provide good opportunities for students to take part in relevant work-related projects. Students benefit, for example, from speaking to a range of industry experts in 'industry weeks' and by participating in fundraising events at the college. Leaders are taking positive action to ensure that students benefit from work placements following the restrictions on this activity during the pandemic.

Students aged 14 to 16 on full-time provision demonstrate a very high standard of behaviour. Staff support students to manage their behaviour, empowering them very effectively to improve and achieve. For example, students respond positively to receiving rewards on a Friday for good attendance. This motivates them to attend their lessons and work hard. Students take part in a range of citizenship activities, such as Remembrance Day and International Women's Day events. This develops their knowledge and understanding of wider topics and encourages them to develop a social conscience.

Adult students demonstrate highly positive attitudes to their learning, enabling them to develop new skills and knowledge. They listen intently in lessons, improving their skills to prepare them for the world of work or further learning. This improves their confidence, helping them to achieve aspirational careers goals which benefit themselves and their families.

Apprentices benefit from stimulating environments that replicate their experience at work. They successfully develop their confidence and resilience as well as professional skills and behaviours through carefully planned theoretical activities. However, in construction, training has been disrupted by staff shortages. As a result, apprentices in this area are still catching up on the learning they have missed.

Students with high needs benefit from highly personalised and tailored programmes of study. They take pride in their work, improving skills such as communication and team building very effectively. Students aspire to high-level careers, which helps them progress into higher-level study, voluntary or paid work. They become more resilient and independent in their everyday lives.

Students feel very safe in the college and its surrounding areas. They participate in interesting and useful tutorial sessions in, for example, sexual health, consent and how to keep themselves safe when socialising.

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

Leaders and managers have very successfully maintained excellent standards of education for students and most apprentices. Leaders have developed a very clear strategic vision for the college, which benefits the residents of Barnsley. Senior leaders and governors work closely and effectively with the local authority to focus on providing 'More and Better' jobs for local residents. They have invested in the college estate to enable students and apprentices to study in highly professional, up-to-date and aspirational learning environments. As a result, students thoroughly enjoy coming to college and working towards their careers goals.

Senior leaders and governors have developed very effective partnerships with a wide range of relevant stakeholders in and around Barnsley. This ensures that they develop curricula that meet current and new business industry needs. For example, they have developed an esports qualification in partnership with the Yorkshire Sports Foundation and the Williams Formula One racing team. As a result, students develop the skills needed to gain aspirational jobs with local employers or progress to higher-level study.

Leaders and managers have carefully considered the provision of subcontracted education to complement their own curriculum offer. In sports, for example, bespoke programmes of study enable students to undertake sports studies that are specifically designed for those interested in football, as opposed to the wider sports curriculum. Leaders and managers closely monitor subcontracted education to ensure it is of high quality and leads to progression opportunities for students in the careers of their choice.

Leaders support and develop teachers and staff to ensure that they are well qualified and can teach their subjects very effectively. Teachers and trainers use their expert knowledge and skills to enhance the curriculum content for students. For example, sports staff update their skills in sports massage therapy, cupping and acupuncture. Teachers then develop students' skills and knowledge to relieve sports injuries and increase circulation to improve performance. As a result, students develop up-to-date and industry-standard skills.

Teachers and assessors successfully plan and sequence the curriculum so that students continuously build on prior learning. They carefully plan what knowledge and skills students and apprentices need to learn first to maximise their potential and progress into employment. Foundation learning teachers ensure that students develop first the skills and behaviours needed to help them become more independent in life. Students' and apprentices' work is of a high standard, and they achieve well.

Teachers and trainers use assessment strategies very effectively to check what students and apprentices have learned. They provide very useful feedback that helps students and apprentices to understand what they have achieved and what they

need to do to improve. For example, they use QR codes to provide students with individualised feedback videos which talk them through the strengths and areas to improve in their work. Teachers and trainers use students' starting points to plan new learning effectively. This ensures that students' and apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours develop over time. As a result, students and apprentices make very positive progress towards their goals and aspirations.

Students benefit from very effective and engaging teaching and training sessions that successfully incorporate the use of technology in their lessons. Leaders develop teachers' digital pedagogical skills via a bespoke 'Discover Digital' innovation hub. Teaching staff ensure that students use a range of technology to help them effectively retain key information and develop their knowledge and skills.

Leaders and managers ensure that students continue to improve their English and mathematics skills effectively. The vast majority of students who enrol without a grade 4 or better in English and mathematics are enrolled on to a GCSE programme. Teachers ensure that most students achieve a grade 4 while they are at college. Most students are focused on improving their individual skills to help them achieve their career goals. However, teachers do not contextualise mathematics into the vocational curriculum as well as they do in relation to English. Consequently, students engage less well in their learning in mathematics lessons. Leaders and managers are developing the curriculum and teachers' knowledge and skills to improve the teaching of mathematics more rapidly.

Students and most apprentices receive effective careers advice and guidance from teachers and staff. Students are very clear on how to prepare for and access their career of choice. Students who are first-generation university applicants are very well-prepared for progression to higher-level study. Consequently, a very high proportion of students progress into positive destinations, including higher education and further training. However, a small number of apprentices do not receive effective careers advice. As a result, they do not understand what wider careers are available on completion of their current apprenticeship.

Staff provide extremely good pastoral and academic support for students. Students highly value and respect the support that they receive and credit staff with helping to transform their lives. They have the opportunity to achieve nationally recognised awards, such as apprentice of the year. Teachers and staff continually monitor students' welfare so that issues are dealt with swiftly to ensure that students stay in learning. As a result, students have very positive attitudes to learning and understand why it is important to develop their social skills as well as gaining qualifications.

Students benefit from good individual support when coping with external pressures that may cause them anxiety. Teachers tackle the poor attendance of these students very well. Staff help students get back on track swiftly if they have fallen behind with their assignment work. Students who may be struggling in their personal life are carefully supported by staff to return to learning and improve their attendance.

As a result, students feel safe and welcomed and are well supported to re-engage in learning.

Leaders have created well-being spaces and learning environments that develop and support students' and members of staff's well-being extremely well. Leaders and staff have created an inclusive environment that promotes reflection and a better sense of personal well-being. For example, a well-being garden provides a space where students can access support from staff and can sit in peace and quiet. As a result, students learn how to cope with stressful situations and develop greater resilience to manage their learning.

Teachers and pastoral staff make very effective use of topical events to develop students' awareness of issues that may impact on them. They teach students about topical current affairs to develop students' awareness of the wider world. Tutors, for example, adapted learning plans to develop students' understanding of the current conflict in Ukraine. This helps students to recognise reliable sources of evidence so that they can develop a balanced view of such events. As a result, students become more active citizens and often get involved in helping their local communities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders have created a positive culture of safeguarding. They have very effective working arrangements with an extensive range of external safeguarding organisations. Leaders and the local authority have designated the college as a centre where 'hate crimes' can be safely reported. Members of the public can report to college staff concerns regarding hate crimes that they witness, which ensures that appropriate follow-up actions will be taken.

Staff and students have a sound understanding of local risks, such as 'Incel' activity and drink spiking. Students develop a good knowledge of topics such as healthy consent and sexual harassment. External speakers help students to improve their understanding of the potential impact on their own health and well-being should they find themselves in difficult situations. As a result, students know how to stay safe and, importantly, to recognise others who may be at risk and respond appropriately.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130524
<b>Address</b>	Church Street Barnsley S70 2YW
<b>Contact number</b>	01226 216216
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.barnsley.ac.uk">www.barnsley.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Yiannis Koursis
<b>Provider type</b>	General further education college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	November 2010
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Reds in the Community T3 Training & Development Ltd Independent Training Services Ltd South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal of quality and student experience, 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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