

Inspection of Runshaw College

Inspection dates: 7 to 10 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Information about this provider

Runshaw College is a medium-sized, general further education college situated in South Ribble and Chorley in Lancashire. It provides education and training in a wide range of subject areas to all age groups. Most of the college's provision is provided for 16- to 18-year-old students and covers A-level and vocational courses in most subject areas. The largest number of students are in science and mathematics, social sciences and business, administration and law.

At the time of the inspection, there were 4,625 students on education programmes for young people and 385 students on adult learning programmes. The adult provision included level 1 programmes in English and mathematics, access to higher education and a small number of professional qualifications from levels 2 to 5. There were 289 apprentices across levels 2 to 5. The vast majority followed apprenticeship standards with the largest cohorts being on business administration and early years practitioner apprenticeships. The college had 69 students for whom they received high-needs funding. Most were integrated across academic and vocational programmes with 15 on specific programmes for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and 10 on supported internship programmes.

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

Leaders promote an inclusive learning environment, where students and apprentices thrive. They are extremely proud of being part of Runshaw College and what they achieve there. Students and apprentices have high aspirations for their futures. They have a mature approach to their studies and take pride in their work.

Students and apprentices demonstrate exemplary behaviour and attitudes. They are extremely polite and highly respectful. Attendance and punctuality at lessons are high.

Students and apprentices benefit from an extensive enrichment curriculum, that helps them to develop their wider knowledge and skills. A large minority of activities are subject or career-based, such as the medical society, science society and social science academies. These activities challenge students to achieve the higher-level knowledge and skills that they need for entrance to prestigious universities to study degree courses in areas, such as medicine and veterinary science.

Students participate regularly in a range of competitions, including the 'Senior Maths Challenge' and dance competitions. Sports activities provide opportunities for students to play sport for pleasure, including glow badminton and archery. Sports academy students train and compete at high levels, both regionally and nationally. Adult students benefit from guest speakers and trips that enrich their learning experience.

Students on vocational courses benefit from highly relevant work experience. They develop valuable new knowledge, skills and behaviours that help them to put their theoretical learning into context. Supported interns develop the skills to be responsible and active employees, who contribute fully to teams within the workplace. They take part in daily team meetings and undertake purposeful tasks that meet the needs of the business.

Leaders, managers and staff provide a wide range of effective support services that help students who are struggling with their studies or with their mental health and well-being. Students feel comfortable to speak to their progress mentors or teachers about their anxieties. They can self-refer to the college's very accessible counselling service or attend individualised sessions with mental health first aiders.

Students and apprentices learn about dignity and respect through effective tutorial sessions. They understand how to challenge discriminatory behaviour. Most students and apprentices are aware of the signs of radicalisation and extremism. They feel very safe at college. They know who to contact if they have any concerns. Staff deal with issues quickly and effectively.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for the curriculum across all provision types. They have designed a well-thought-out and ambitious curriculum, that helps most students and apprentices achieve ambitious destinations and career goals. For example, the performing arts curriculum includes preparing students for entry to prestigious specialist performing arts institutions. Leaders and managers work effectively with other providers and external partners to ensure that most of the curriculum meets both the needs of their local and regional areas, and the wider ambitions of their students and apprentices.

Teachers and trainers plan the curriculum in a logical way to ensure that students and apprentices know more and remember more over time. They quickly establish what students and apprentices already know and what they need to learn to plan meaningful programmes of learning. Teachers on access to higher education courses use natural links between topics, such as psychology, sociology and criminology, to reinforce students' knowledge and understanding across a variety of different modules and scenarios. Teachers individualise learning for each student with high needs based on their education, health and care plan. This ensures that students' learning or work programme meets their career ambitions and, for supported interns, leads to paid employment.

Supported interns and most apprentices benefit from an effective blend of on- and off-the-job training. This focuses on the development of valuable new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need for the workplace and for their lives outside work. Business administration apprentices successfully plan, implement and manage valuable real work projects that improve the efficiency of business processes, such as the issuing of laptops to children in a school. Hospitality apprentices learn quickly about the needs of customers with allergies and sensitivities and the implications of these to the industry and to themselves.

Most staff have high expectations of what students and apprentices can achieve. They have a strong and ambitious focus on students taking responsibility for their own learning. This helps most students to quickly develop their independent learning skills in preparation for their next steps. However, students who struggle to understand new information and concepts on their own find this approach challenging. They are unable to make the progress expected of them. A minority of teachers do not consistently or rigorously check students' understanding of the key information that they have read independently. As a result, teachers do not always identify and rectify any misconceptions that students have unintentionally developed.

The amount of time that trainers dedicate to apprentices to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours is sometimes limited. Apprentices too often complete study, research and assignment work independently. As a result, hospitality apprentices do not routinely develop the advanced skills they need to achieve high grades. College managers have rightly identified the need for further improvements.

They acknowledge that apprentices need more support to help them prepare for examinations and to achieve high grades across all aspects of their final assessments.

Most teachers and trainers assess students' and apprentices' work regularly. Most students and apprentices articulate clearly how rectifying previous mistakes has helped them to improve their understanding of key concepts, for example using Pi instead of theta in engineering calculations. However, in a minority of instances, such as in level 3 health and social care and A levels in history, mathematics, chemistry and sociology, teachers do not routinely check students' work. Consequently, these students do not always know what is required of them in future assessments.

Most teachers record and monitor students' progress comprehensively. They use this information effectively to identify any additional support that students need to help them to succeed. Activities include individual support sessions from specialist teachers, such as in A-level mathematics, small group tuition sessions and a range of software packages for self-study. This helps students to catch up quickly if they fall behind in their studies or are not making the progress expected of them. However, processes for monitoring apprentices' progress are less well developed. As a result, support activities to help apprentices catch up are not always implemented swiftly enough.

Teachers and trainers are highly qualified. They are subject specialists. Teachers apply their expertise skilfully by explaining difficult concepts clearly, such as breaking down very complex equations in A-level chemistry. They reinforce learning through a wide variety of online methods, such as quizzes. This creates positive learning environments and helps students to know more and remember more over time. In A-level sociology, teachers constantly refer students to what they have learned in previous lessons such as applying the secularisation theory to post-modernism. This helps students to reinforce their understanding of topics and to develop higher-level thinking skills.

Apprentices benefit from the support, guidance and expertise of their workplace mentors, who help them to develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Early years apprentices learn how to keep children safe by completing detailed risk assessments and managing possible hazards when taking children on external trips and visits. Hospitality apprentices learn how to safely prepare vegetables in different styles, developing their culinary knife cutting skills.

The work of most students and apprentices is of a high standard. It shows the development of their evaluative and analytical skills over time. Assignments completed by access to higher education students demonstrate the significant progress that they make from their starting points. They learn to assimilate complex information to create clear and well-structured responses to assignment briefs.

Students and apprentices receive high-quality careers information, advice and guidance. Careers staff prioritise students with identified needs and those who have

asked for careers advice in the first term. Trainers refer apprentices to the college's careers service to help them to develop their CV and to prepare for interviews. Most apprentices are aware of the different range of further study options available, such as higher-level apprenticeships. Students and apprentices gain further useful information that helps them with decisions about their next steps, such as the cost of higher education and how to apply for a student loan.

Governors have a clear vision for the college. They are highly ambitious for students and apprentices. Governors have a broad range of relevant skills and experiences that they use effectively to carry out their roles. They monitor underperforming courses and apprenticeships closely and provide rigorous challenge to leaders and managers where they identify that performance is not at the expected standard. Governors understand most of the strengths and weaknesses at the college and support leaders to make improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the safety and well-being of students and apprentices are a high priority. They have implemented appropriate policies and procedures that they use effectively to report and monitor safeguarding concerns and those related to the 'Prevent' duty. The designated safeguarding team has strong and effective links with local, external agencies, such as the local authority, the Police, mental health teams and the local multi-agency safeguarding hub.

Staff take part regularly in a range of safeguarding related training. A few members of staff undertook training recently to help students to develop resilience and to support those with mental and physical well-being issues. Students and apprentices receive frequent updates on safeguarding topics. Progress mentors teach them about healthy relationships and consent. Students receive further training from external speakers on topics, such as sexual health, safe driving and eating disorders. Leaders recently introduced examination-based stress-reduction sessions for students, following an increase in students with examination-based anxieties.

Leaders ensure that new staff undergo appropriate pre-employment checks to confirm their suitability for working at the college.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should review their approach to independent learning to ensure that teachers support all students to understand new information and concepts accurately. They should ensure that teachers identify and rectify quickly any misconceptions that students have developed through studying on their own.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that all apprentices receive sufficient teaching and training to help them to fully prepare for external assessments and

to develop the advanced skills they need to achieve the high grades they are capable of.

- Leaders and managers should ensure that all teachers check students' work, including how well they understand what they have learned, in order to provide helpful feedback.
- Leaders and managers should further develop processes for monitoring apprentices' progress to ensure that apprentices receive any additional support that they need swiftly.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130741
Address	Langdale Road Leyland Lancashire PR25 3DQ
Contact number	01772 622677
Website	www.runshaw.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Clare Russell
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2008
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality, 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' work, seeking the views of students, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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