

Inspection of The Education Training Collective

Inspection dates: 23 to 26 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Outstanding
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for students with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

The Education Training Collective (ETC) is a large provider of further education and skills in the Tees Valley. It is made up of three colleges and an independent training provider: Stockton Riverside College, Redcar and Cleveland College, Bede Sixth Form College and NETA Training. The group was formed in August 2018 following the merger of Stockton Riverside College and Redcar and Cleveland College.

The group provides academic and vocational programmes for young people, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships and provision for students with high needs. At the time of the inspection, there were 6,199 students, including apprentices, across the group, of whom most were enrolled on education programmes for young people and adult learning programmes. ETC works with eight subcontractors to provide apprenticeships and adult learning programmes.

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

Students are very proud to study at the different college campuses. They value highly the active role that they take in working with leaders and staff to create an inclusive and vibrant community through their class representatives and the principals' forums. At NETA Training, for example, this has resulted in the creation of a multi-faith room and the development of a new communal area within the centre.

Students benefit from very safe and inclusive learning environments across the college sites. They have access to support for their mental health, basic needs and development of their digital skills, including transport and food parcels. Students on programmes for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) enjoy learning about British culture as well as sharing and comparing their experiences outside of the United Kingdom. They speak freely about living in a democratic country and different religious beliefs, and they value the opportunity to learn about each other's heritage.

Students benefit from a strong culture of positive respect and tolerance across all college sites. Students of different abilities and backgrounds work harmoniously together and support and inspire each other. In performing arts, students in rehearsal sessions listen to each other and share ideas, and their contributions are valued by all. Students are very confident that their views will be listened to by staff and their peers.

Students benefit from an extensive enrichment programme that helps them to develop their wider employability skills, confidence and resilience. The core enrichment calendar includes 'mental health month', physical activities and topics such as supporting loneliness and sexual health. Tutors in curriculum areas provide frequent bespoke enrichment activities linked to their vocational areas. These include, for example, opportunities on public services programmes to work directly with police officers and on engineering programmes to work with large employers on refurbishment projects.

Students feel safe across all campuses. Tutors provide helpful teaching and support to ensure that students are aware of local risks and how to keep safe from them. Students talk knowledgeably about the risks locally of county lines and are aware of the increased risks, due to the current economic situation, that people will be more susceptible to this. Students have a good understanding of the threat locally of knife crime.

Leaders and managers place high importance on the well-being of students. They recognised the stresses and anxieties that students were exposed to during the COVID-19 pandemic. They provide support for students through the welfare and safeguarding teams, who address concerns through appropriate support and, if necessary, escalate safeguarding issues through liaison with other agencies.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for the curriculum they offer across the group. Students and apprentices benefit from useful and relevant training in their local communities which meets the needs of employers and the priorities of the local enterprise partnership. Leaders and managers provide very effective programmes to support students who are significantly disadvantaged, including Prince's Trust programmes, Youth Employment Initiative provision and ESOL programmes for unaccompanied young asylum seekers. In these programmes, students benefit from bespoke learning and support based on their individual needs to help them make progress towards their goals.

Since the merger, leaders and managers have transformed the leadership and the quality of provision at Redcar and Cleveland College. They have also successfully improved the provision at NETA Training. Successful strategies include highly effective management recruitment, improvement of teaching and learning and aligning the curriculum offer closely to local needs. As a result, provision at these two campuses is now of good quality and is highly valued by employers and other stakeholders in the communities that the campuses serve. The number of young people joining courses at Redcar and Cleveland College has increased significantly since the merger, as many more young people living in the borough consider it the college of first choice.

Leaders and managers successfully utilise funding gained for growth and improvement projects to provide much-needed support to the local communities that they serve. Current projects include extending facilities at NETA, the Clean Energy Education Hub and investing in learning resources at Bede Sixth Form College. Students benefit from live-streaming rooms, industry-standard equipment and collaborative working spaces.

Leaders and managers have developed a highly effective strategy for subcontracting. They engage with specialist providers that meet the needs of employers and students in the Tees Valley area very well. As a result, students benefit from niche provision and access to local jobs which would normally be out of reach. For example, students gain employment in the offshore wind industry following training in working at height and sea survival.

Leaders have in place a rigorous governance model. Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the group and provide highly effective challenge to leaders. Governors are strategically chosen to bring specific skills into the group. They carry out learning walks and meet students and staff frequently to ensure that they understand the provision and the community.

Teachers are well qualified and use their subject expertise effectively to plan and prepare learning and training that is innovative, creative and engaging. As a result, most students, including those with high needs, are prepared well for future opportunities in education and employment. For example, in engineering, tutors use

their subject knowledge about science and mathematics to expand students' understanding of mathematics. Students then apply their knowledge skilfully when producing engineering components, working collaboratively on projects with their peers. Tutors on apprenticeship programmes model professional behaviours effectively. In health and social care apprenticeships, tutors with significant professional experience provide insights for apprentices into the wide-ranging sector. As a result, apprentices gain a helpful understanding of a range of health and care settings other than their own.

In education programmes for young people, tutors carefully sequence the curriculum to develop students' knowledge and skills effectively over time. In level 3 engineering programmes, students cover essential health and safety topics first before studying engineering mathematics to build on and apply their existing mathematical knowledge. In A-level media studies, students begin by studying the work of different theorists and then apply their understanding in their work in subsequent units. In level 2 hairdressing courses, students are taught to work safely in the salon before developing cutting and colouring skills.

Apprentices benefit from a well-planned and responsive curriculum that enables them to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours effectively over time. Tutors and assessors plan good-quality, on- and off-the-job training with employers and apprentices. Employers are fully committed to the apprenticeship programme and understand their responsibilities to support training. Apprentices become integral to their organisations. Most apprentices successfully complete their programmes and gain full-time employment.

Tutors accurately assess students' starting points and ensure that most students are on the right programme. In access to higher education, tutors match the content of the programmes to the job roles to which students aspire. They identify the support needs of students and the strategies needed to enable them to learn effectively. In programmes for students with high needs, tutors make good use of information about students' existing skills and knowledge to develop individual programmes for students and to put effective support strategies in place. However, a very small number of students with high needs are not enrolled on an appropriate programme and do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Tutors carefully and sensitively support adult students and break down barriers to learning. Adult students on courses leading to functional skills qualifications benefit from flexible and innovative opportunities to enable them to participate in both online and face-to-face learning at times that fit around their commitments. They quickly develop confidence in their abilities, which helps them to make good progress on their courses.

Students on education programmes for young people benefit from relevant and useful work experience. In health and social care, students access work experience in settings that care for adults with learning disabilities. Performing arts students enter competitions organised by the National Theatre that provide them with support from a professional director and the opportunity to perform at a major

theatre. These opportunities help to prepare students for further training, education and employment.

Students benefit from effective teaching in English and mathematics which helps them to improve their knowledge and skills over time and prepares them well for their examinations. They understand the importance of these subjects for future employment and further learning. Students with high needs receive effective support to improve their English and mathematics skills, particularly in relation to everyday life activities such as managing money and reading bus timetables.

Most tutors use assessment strategies effectively and check learning frequently. Tutors provide helpful feedback to students and apprentices that helps them to understand what they do well and how they can improve their work to reach their aspirational goals. Tutors on education programmes for young people use mobile phone applications effectively to enable students to recall what they have learned in the previous session. Engineering apprentices receive useful feedback on practical assessments that they have conducted, such as when working on direct online circuits.

Tutors and progress coaches provide appropriate support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students with additional learning needs are provided with assistive technologies and devices, alongside practical help such as overlays for dyslexia. Visually impaired students use a magnifier and an enlarged computer screen to support them when reading texts and use technology to enable them to label items with audio labels.

Careers staff and tutors support students well to prepare them for their next steps. Students benefit from frequent contact with employers in and out of college, valuable work experience and master classes provided by employers and former students. This helps students to build their confidence, resilience and work-related skills. Leaders and managers have established a 'Girls' Network' where students from a variety of backgrounds are matched to mentors in the workplace who support them with university applications and applications for apprenticeships and other courses. Students are well informed about their next steps and develop their confidence in applying to prestigious universities and for high-profile job roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have put in place appropriate policies and procedures that detail how they keep students and staff safe. They follow the policies and procedures closely and use them effectively to keep students and apprentices safe when safeguarding concerns are raised.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) have relevant experience and complete useful training appropriate to their role and beyond, including training in domestic violence, eating disorders and the impact on students of adverse experiences and trauma.

They have very close relationships with the local authorities in Stockton and Redcar and Cleveland who provide them with frequent updates and relevant information regarding local risks and safeguarding themes. This includes information about knife crime, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation and online radicalisation and terrorism. DSLs cascade information frequently to staff, who discuss issues with students in tutorials and reviews.

Students have a good understanding of the risks of sexual harm, peer-on-peer abuse and consensual relationships. They know what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. They are provided with helpful support in tutorials to develop their understanding. Students feel confident that if they or their peers experience any unwanted behaviour, staff will deal with it effectively and provide them with any support that they may need.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that all students with high needs are enrolled on the right programmes to meet their needs.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130576
Address	Harvard Avenue Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6FB
Contact number	01642 865400
Website	www.the-etc.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Phil Cook
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	The Skills Network Ltd Delta – North Consett Ltd Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority Teesside University RelyOn Nutec UK Ltd Flexi Training (North East) Ltd NC Group Ltd Pro-Active Safety Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the group executive director for planning and infrastructure, 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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