

# Inspection of Calderdale College

Inspection dates: 8 to 11 November 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</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>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

Calderdale College is a general further education college in West Yorkshire. Its main campus is in Halifax where the vast majority of provision is based. The college also has two specialist centres, Motivate in Halifax for motor vehicle students and the Engineering Centre in Brighouse. At the time of inspection, there were 1,733 students on education programmes for young people, 1,707 adult students, 638 apprentices and 113 students with high needs. The college works with one subcontractor, Project Challenge, which is based in Halifax and provides training for young people who are not in education or training.

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

Students and apprentices feel welcome at Calderdale College and fully part of the college community. They respond positively to the high expectations which are embedded into the culture of the college and develop valuable behaviours including motivation and independence. Students and apprentices listen respectfully to each other and are interested in what others have to say. This is particularly evident for students on education programmes for young people who take part in open and frank discussions in their citizenship tutorials.

Students and apprentices benefit from a curriculum which is designed carefully to focus on what is needed for their future careers. They develop new and valuable knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare them for further training, education and employment. Students on education programmes for young people take part in project-based learning where they work with students in other curriculum areas and with real clients in business and the community. For example, students in construction, engineering and art worked together to design and build moving sets for the Halifax Light Opera Society Juniors' performance of 'The Wizard of Oz'.

Students on education programmes for young people benefit greatly from consistently effective teaching and an innovative curriculum that focuses closely on the skills, knowledge and behaviours that employers need. They learn through projects for employers and organisations and carry out relevant work experience. Nearly all of these students successfully complete their programmes and move on to further education, employment, higher education or apprenticeships.

Adult students are equipped very successfully with the skills and confidence to become more independent, to take control of their own destiny and to make choices for themselves beyond more traditional roles. They benefit from access to high-quality facilities, such as a commercial salon for trainee hairdressers. Adults who might otherwise be unlikely to engage with education participate in learning in community centres close to where they live. Adult students gain a comprehensive and conscientious education which often transforms their lives.

Apprentices successfully develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours which enable them to contribute to their workplaces more effectively and confidently. Training officers prepare most apprentices well for life in modern Britain, covering relevant topics in training, such as equality and diversity. However, a few training officers do not have sufficient contact with apprentices' employers or provide apprentices with frequent enough reviews, which slows the pace at which apprentices progress.

Students with high needs enjoy coming to college to learn new skills, and most are successful in moving into employment, further education and training. Most students benefit from individualised learning programmes which meet their specific needs and enable them to be successful, either on specialist programmes or alongside their peers on vocational courses. However, a few students on specialist provision spend too much time focusing on skills which they already have and not enough time on those which they still need to develop, slowing the pace of their learning.

## **Contribution to meeting skills needs**

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders align their ambitious skills strategy very closely to local, regional and national skills priorities, and are responsive to employer needs and opportunities as they emerge. They engage effectively with a wide range of stakeholders to understand current employment and sector skills needs, and are very active in involving stakeholders in the design and implementation of the curriculum.

Leaders have created a culture of continuous engagement with industry experts and community organisations. This provides students and apprentices across all provision types with exposure to the real world of work, through live client briefs, guest speakers and work experience opportunities.

Key stakeholders have high levels of confidence in leaders' ability to provide appropriate training that contributes very positively to meeting skills needs. They recognise that this contribution will help to futureproof the economy of the region and increase the employment and educational opportunities for Calderdale's residents and employers.

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

Leaders and managers have a very clear and well-articulated purpose for the college, which demonstrates their deep understanding of the community they serve. They rightly recognise that the college is a community asset, and aim to deliver high-quality education which meets the needs of the people of Calderdale and the neighbouring boroughs. They have high expectations of all students and apprentices and are passionate about and highly committed to changing lives through education.

Leaders and managers have established a strong, relevant and innovative curriculum that they deliver successfully. Through project-based learning and links with stakeholders and employers, leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum is focused on students and apprentices developing the skills that they need to be successful in their future employment and their lives. Students and apprentices benefit from well-planned teaching and assessment which develops the breadth of knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need for their desired careers, and enables them to achieve their qualifications.

Governance is effective. A well-established board of governors includes members with a broad range of relevant expertise and experience. Governors understand their role clearly, including their statutory duties. They devote time to the college, including attending student forums where they listen to students and apprentices and take action to improve their experience. Governors are active in shaping the strategic direction of the college and provide valuable scrutiny and support to senior leaders.

Leaders and managers have high expectations for their students and apprentices to achieve as well as they can. Staff throughout the college model and positively reinforce the behaviours and attitudes that they expect in students and apprentices, who respond fully. Students and apprentices value the support and encouragement of the staff who they encounter in every part of the college.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a high level of commitment to providing students with a rich and broad educational experience. Students are actively involved in supporting others in their community. For example, students in sports work with primary schools' sports clubs and support their events. In a project with the industrial museum in Halifax, art students recorded the memories of retired people so their knowledge is captured for future generations of visitors. Adult students take part in useful work experience, which better prepares them for their future careers.

Leaders and managers have established and embedded a culture of continuous improvement throughout the college. This includes the use of rigorous self-assessment to enable them to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the college and purposeful meetings to support and improve the experiences of students and apprentices. Leaders have clear and effective oversight of their subcontractor. Staff in the college work effectively as a team and understand clearly how each individual role contributes to the success of the college.

Knowledgeable and well-qualified lecturers and training officers use a range of effective methods to ensure that students and apprentices make good progress from their identified starting points. They carefully check students' and apprentices' understanding and provide helpful feedback which helps students and apprentices to improve their work. Adult students in level 2 hairdressing learn through effective demonstrations and become confident enough to work with real clients at an early stage of the course. Students and apprentices apply their learning when working with employers. For example, level 3 business students have pitched business plans to the chief executive of the Piece Hall in Halifax.

Lecturers and training officers successfully integrate English and mathematics into the curriculum, which enables students and apprentices to make good progress in developing their skills in these areas. For example, students with high needs work in the college's cafe and learn to weigh ingredients accurately. Adult students on access to higher education courses are supported to enhance their academic writing and research skills.

Lecturers and training officers provide effective teaching to students who are studying towards a qualification in English or mathematics. They use their expertise well to explain topics in a comprehensible and helpful way. They work closely with students and apprentices to help them to understand and remember what they have learned through reinforcement and repetition. Most students and apprentices enjoy their English and mathematics courses and value the individualised approach.

Leaders and managers have developed a successful professional development programme. Their professional learning framework is a bespoke programme which, following a review of their learning and development needs, provides staff with a choice of different pathways to develop their skills. Staff consider that they have ownership of their own professional development, with the support and oversight of line managers and senior leaders, and that the programme has resulted in tangible improvements throughout the college.

Leaders and managers thoroughly understand the culture of the local area where the college is based and the socio-economic factors which play a part in the local community. They understand the risks and the barriers to education faced by their students and apprentices and take a wide range of actions to remove barriers and maximise opportunities. Leaders and managers have developed a curriculum through which students and apprentices learn content that is broader than that needed for their qualification and that enables them to develop the skills, behaviours and attributes that they need for employment and to enhance their lives.

Students attend their sessions well, arriving on time and ready to learn. Leaders and managers have developed a rigorous strategy to improve attendance which is implemented consistently across the college. Lecturers and training officers support individual students and apprentices with determination and dedication to find the root cause of attendance issues and work with them to find solutions which will be successful for each individual. Students and apprentices improve and maintain their attendance and punctuality, developing behaviours that they need for future employment.

Leaders and managers have established a highly effective tutorial programme for students on education programmes for young people which includes a comprehensive range of topics relevant to young people growing up in modern Britain. This is planned carefully and adapted as events happen locally or nationally. Coaches support students to have open and frank discussions in a safe space, on topics that students may have no other opportunity to learn about in their lives. Students develop a thorough and real-world understanding of current and relevant issues, such as equality, the online world and finance. They are equipped with the knowledge, strategies and language to be able to understand the choices that they make and to own the consequences of those choices.

Lecturers, coaches and training officers prepare students and apprentices effectively to understand the educational and career options which are open to them on completion of their current studies. Students and apprentices understand what they need to do and how to achieve their aspirations.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a positive culture of safeguarding, and students and apprentices feel safe. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in the college.

Comprehensive policies are in place, and staff, students and apprentices are confident to report all types of concerns.

Senior leaders have enacted an appropriate response to the 'Prevent' duty, and students and apprentices have a sound understanding from their training on this topic. Staff are vigilant and report concerns effectively to the safeguarding team. Their training has enhanced their confidence in challenging any students regarding extremist viewpoints and in bringing the related issues to tutorials to discuss in a safe and informed space.

Leaders, managers and the safeguarding team communicate effectively with a range of external organisations, including local police, the violence reduction officer, social services and local schools. They liaise with relevant agencies to support students who are near to leaving or have recently left the care system. Leaders have implemented appropriate safe recruitment practices to ensure that staff are suitable to work with students, including those aged 16 to 18 and vulnerable adults.

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

- Ensure that all training officers maintain effective contact with apprentices' employers and provide apprentices with frequent and helpful reviews.
- Ensure that all students with high needs in specialist provision develop the skills that they need to make rapid progress.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130535
<b>Address</b>	Francis Street Halifax HX1 3UZ
<b>Contact number</b>	01422 399303
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.calderdale.ac.uk">www.calderdale.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Julia Gray
<b>Provider type</b>	General further education college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January to 2 February 2018
<b>Main subcontractor</b>	Project Challenge

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the interim director of quality and head of employer services, as nominees. 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

Karen Anderson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Cath Jackson	His Majesty's Inspector
Chloe Rendall	His Majesty's Inspector
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