

# Inspection of Burton and South Derbyshire College

Inspection dates: 10 to 13 October 2023

## Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

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>Outstanding</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

Burton and South Derbyshire College (BSDC) is a medium-sized general further education college primarily serving East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire. The college provides a broad range of technical, vocational and academic courses spanning 13 subject sector areas ranging from entry-level up to degree-level courses. The latter of which are delivered in partnership with Staffordshire University but are out of scope of this inspection.

The college has two main campuses the largest of which is in Burton town centre. This campus provides learners with access to a wide range of courses and specialist facilities in health and social care, computing and games design, creative and performing arts, hair and beauty, hospitality and catering, sports, health and fitness, and early years and education. In addition, the college also operates a dedicated construction academy based in Swadlincote, South Derbyshire. This centre specialises in craft, technical and higher-level courses for learners and apprentices in brickwork, carpentry and joinery, electrical, plumbing and engineering.

The college also manages a specialist apprenticeship development centre based in Burnaston, Derbyshire providing engineering and manufacturing apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3 for Toyota Manufacturing UK and its supply chain.

Two specialist subcontractors provide a range of adult provision linked to local skills and employability priorities including counselling, door supervisor, logistics and business-related qualifications.

Currently there are 1724 learners on education programmes for young people at levels 1 to 3. The largest subject areas are art and design, media, computing and digital, engineering and construction, early years, health and social care, hospitality and catering, and sport and fitness. Sixty-one learners study on T-level courses at level 3 in education and childcare, health and engineering.

There are 684 adult learners studying on courses from entry level to level 6. Around two thirds are studying on technical vocational and/or academic courses, of which a third are English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and a very small minority study on access to higher education courses. The remaining adult learners study towards a range of employability courses taught online and/or in person by the college or its subcontractors.

Eighty-six learners with high needs study at the college. These learners access a range of supported educational pathways including internships to develop their independence and prepare them for adulthood. Learners with profound and/or severe learning difficulties access specialist support via the Andrew Phillips Unit based at the Burton town centre campus.

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

Almost all learners and apprentices make rapid and sustained progress because of the high-quality teaching and coaching they routinely receive. They consistently benefit from access to a well-sequenced set of learning experiences that develop their knowledge and skills effectively over time and in line with their career ambitions.

Learners and apprentices value and use frequently the plentiful vocational, technical and academic resources provided by teachers including those accessible via the virtual learning environment. They benefit from the precise advice and guidance that teachers provide about what they do well and what they need to do to improve the standard of their work and to excel in their learning.

Relationships between teachers, learners and apprentices are exceptionally strong. Learners trust their teachers and other support staff implicitly. Learners and apprentices have excellent attitudes to learning and clearly enjoy coming to the college and, as a result, attendance and punctuality is routinely high and improving. Almost all learners and apprentices arrive at their lessons on time and are ready to learn. They engage enthusiastically in planned learning activities, taking every opportunity to learn as much as possible.

Learners and apprentices are unfailingly polite, positive and considerate of each other, their teachers and visitors to the college. They move around the college estate in a calm and orderly manner. In the workplace, apprentices closely adhere to site-specific protocols regarding their conduct and when undertaking allocated tasks, they wear their company uniforms with pride. Apprentices become highly valued members of staff.

Learners benefit from being able to participate fully in decision-making processes regarding matters that affect them and relate to their learning. For example, the student council plays a highly active part in college life, enabling the student body to voice their opinions and influence the provision of cross-college enrichment activities.

Learners who have experienced difficulties and/or trauma in their lives, such as care leavers and those with mental health difficulties, benefit from well planned and carefully crafted support that enables them to thrive and develop successfully into adulthood. Learners with high needs follow highly individualised learning programmes that meet their needs well.

Learners and apprentices benefit from a safe and welcoming environment at the college and in the workplace. Learners say that they never feel alone and that they always have someone to go to if the need arises.

## **Contribution to meeting skills needs**

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders have nurtured exceptionally strong and highly productive relationships with an extensive range of employer representative groups, civic and community organisations and other key agency partners. These links provide leaders with a comprehensive insight of both current and emerging skills priorities.

Leaders and managers skilfully use accurate and up-to-date market intelligence to develop a thorough understanding of the key economic indicators, skills priorities and labour market gaps across Staffordshire and the wider midlands region. They are highly adept at refining their insight regarding the planning and adaptation of the curriculum by working collaboratively with a broad collection of education partners. For example, as part of a seven-college partnership, leaders at BSDC contributed to the curriculum design and development of a digital literacy and capability programme to enhance the information technology skills of learners across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

Employers, civic organisations, and community stakeholders highly value the college's responsiveness and its collaborative approach to providing opportunities for learners and apprentices to develop skills for employment and progression.

Leaders with the support of college patrons and fellows ensure that the essential skills identified for each industry pathway are developed and taught through a robust and well-informed process that puts skills development at the heart of the curriculum. In addition, leaders through their 'skills promise' maintain a relentless focus on the development of learners' soft skills such as communication, self-confidence, resilience, and problem-solving that employers highlight as key employability attributes. As a result, leaders have developed a set of curriculums that meet local and regional needs exceptionally well. The curricula equip learners and apprentices with the skills they need to improve their lives and support social mobility through progression to further study and/or the world of work.

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

Leading by example, the chief executive, senior leadership team and governors have worked with strength and determination to enable learners and apprentices, including those on subcontracted provision, to be successful in all aspects of their learning and personal development. Leaders and governors have created a high performing culture which brings out the best in everyone, where staff feel valued and morale is high. Leaders have a clear sense of purpose in meeting the educational and skills needs of the communities and industry-related sectors that the college seeks to serve.

Teachers ensure that learners and apprentices develop a comprehensive understanding of subject content that enables them to routinely produce work of a very high standard and develop much sought-after employability skills. In conjunction with college patrons and industry partners who advise on the curriculum, teachers carefully identify the core knowledge, skills and behaviours that

learners and apprentices need to develop. They ensure that these foundation learning components are sequenced logically and taught early in the course. For example, in level 3 games design, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to support 16 to 19 learners to develop the essentials of character mechanics, using digital drawing and sketching before moving on to three-dimensional modelling and sculpting.

Teachers are highly adept in ensuring that learning increases in complexity over time. They ask incisive and thoughtful questions and use imaginative and well-planned learning activities that encourage learners to think more deeply and explore a broad range of related ideas and concepts. On adult ESOL courses, teachers develop learners' language concepts particularly well by focusing on the importance of correct pronunciation and on the rules relating to the correct use of nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives before moving on to more complicated content. Learners then successfully apply this learning through recap and retrieval activities that extend their confidence to apply these newly acquired skills to their everyday lives.

Learners and apprentices are taught by highly qualified practitioners with up-to-date and relevant academic knowledge and vocational industry experience. Teachers are passionate about their subject and impart their knowledge and understanding with enthusiasm. They are excellent role models, providing inspiration, motivation and challenging learners and apprentices to do their best at all times. Teachers integrate English and mathematics effectively into almost all lessons. However, for the very few learners on the T-level course in education and childcare, teachers' planning of learning does not challenge them to produce written work of the appropriate standard.

Learners on vocational courses have good access to specialist resources that accurately reflect the industries in which they hope to work. For example, at the town centre campus 16 to 19 learners in level 1 professional cookery hone their culinary skills in commercial kitchens; level 2 learners in digital art use industry standard software to develop the technical skills associated with artistic expressionism in manipulating images using techniques such as head splits and vector art. Learners in level 3 sports and education extend their physical performance by accessing the world-class performance and fitness facilities at St George's Park.

At the apprenticeship development centre, level 2 and 3 apprentices in engineering benefit from exceptional training resources in programmable logic controllers, hydraulics and pneumatics. They use these resources well to refine their technical and problem-solving skills when maintaining complex industrial equipment used in the production of motor vehicles.

Well-crafted teaching and learning alongside exceptionally strong pastoral and academic support enables the vast majority of young and adult learners and a high and increasing proportion of apprentices to make excellent progress. However, while apprenticeship outcomes are well above those reported nationally, leaders

acknowledge the need to improve these further including those who complete in the planned time.

Disabled learners and those with high needs benefit from a very inclusive and caring experience where their individual support requirements are met exceptionally well. Teachers provide them with every opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential.

Pastoral and academic support are outstanding. Learners and apprentices benefit from exceptionally well-planned tutorial provision that is structured around the 'BE' model of BE Tutorial; BE Independent; BE Social. This very detailed and comprehensive provision supports learners to develop a precise understanding of life in modern contemporary society and their role in advocating democratic principles, such as the importance of celebrating differences and treating each other as equals.

Learners and apprentices benefit from particularly good access to an extensive range of highly relevant extra-curricula activities which staff promote exceptionally well throughout the college. For example, gaining additional qualifications that aid employability such as construction skills certification scheme cards, participating in international work experience, exchange placements supported through the Turing scheme, plus regular opportunities to participate at World Skills competitions. In addition, progress coaches closely monitor learners' and apprentices' development of soft skills aligned to the 'skills promise', which is a very prominent feature of the college's response to helping all learners to prepare for the world of work. Collectively these activities successfully support learners and apprentices to make informed decisions about their futures and career aspirations.

Leaders' and managers' strategies to assure and improve teachers' performance is rigorous and takes into account a wide range of information that has sharp focus on learning and learners' progress. Staff who are new to teaching receive excellent individual support and training through a well-considered institution wide professional development programme. Teachers' development and support activities are highly effective and beneficial in improving performance in almost all cases.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130809
<b>Address</b>	Lichfield Street Burton-on-Trent Staffordshire DE14 3RL
<b>Contact number</b>	01283494400
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.bsdc.ac.uk/">https://www.bsdc.ac.uk/</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Dawn Ward CBE DL
<b>Provider type</b>	General Further Education College
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 to 29 September 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	The Skills Network Pilot IMS Limited

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal/executive director 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

Victor Reid, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Higgins	His Majesty's Inspector
Debbie Whiston	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Jaswant Mann	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Whatsize	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqui Ecoeur	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Green	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Lane	Ofsted Inspector
Joel Dalhouse	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Dowling	His Majesty's Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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