

Inspection of Brooklands College

Inspection dates: 5 to 8 December 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Information about this provider

Brooklands College is a general further education college with two main campuses in Weybridge and Ashford. The college also operates working beauty salons in Weybridge and Ashford town centres. The college provides courses from entry level to level 3. Leaders work in partnership with regional universities to offer courses at level 4 to level 6 on their premises.

At the time of inspection, there were approximately 1350 students aged 16 to 18 years old on study programmes, 800 students on adult learning programmes and 240 apprentices. There were 110 students in receipt of high needs funding.

The largest subject areas for education programmes for young people include construction and engineering, service industries, and social sciences. Most adult learners were studying English for speakers of a second language (ESOL) and accountancy. Most apprentices were training in construction, engineering or early years. A significant number of learners study English and mathematics GCSE and some apprentices and learners with high needs study English and mathematics functional skills.

In September 2023, the college began teaching T levels in health, education and early years, and digital production, design and development. However, due to the newness of these programmes, they were not in scope for this inspection.

The college does not work with any subcontractors.

The college has been in formal intervention from the Further Education Commissioner's team since May 2019. This was a response to concerns about the college's financial position and following the failure of an apprenticeship subcontractor in late 2018.

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

Most learners and apprentices have positive attitudes to learning and are very motivated to succeed. Most learners and apprentices attend well and arrive promptly to classroom lessons and concentrate well. When in workshops, they listen attentively to instructions and work carefully and at pace to complete their tasks. As a result, learners and apprentices work hard at their studies and demonstrate consistently the behaviours expected for study and employment.

Learners benefit from a calm and studious environment in which they learn well. Most behave courteously and are respectful of one another. When this is not the case, staff act quickly to deal with any disruption. Learners with high needs work together respectfully, listen to staff and peers and focus on their work attentively. As a result, most learners and apprentices enjoy lessons and develop new knowledge and skills.

Most students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, develop new knowledge, skills and behaviour well due to skilled and caring staff who teach effectively. For example, creative media students develop a sound theoretical knowledge of journalism skills, such as auteur theory, before producing high-quality documentaries. Level 3 motor vehicle apprentices learn new skills to enable them to work with electric vehicles and they apply these skills quickly in their workplaces. As a result, most learners and apprentices learn useful new skills, achieve well and progress to positive destinations.

Most learners and apprentices benefit from a well-structured tutorial programme that covers a wide range of topics such as healthy relationships, equality and diversity and drug awareness. Teachers of young learners embed these topics routinely in their lessons. For example, level 1 hospitality teachers challenge stereotypes about gender roles traditionally associated with females such as cooking and cleaning. As a result, most learners have the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their lifestyles and behaviours.

Leaders rightly recognise they need to further embed this curriculum for some adult accountancy learners and for motor vehicle apprentices. They have clear plans in place to do so but it is too early to see the impact.

Most learners and apprentices develop their confidence and character thoughtfully. They benefit from access to useful support about mental health and opportunities for worthwhile work experience with employers and within the local community. For example, young learners have access to youth hubs and external support for mental health issues and adult ESOL learners foster positive mindsets through classroom sessions. Level 1 hair and beauty learners visit a dementia care home to carry out beauty treatment for patients where they develop empathy and patience. As a result, most learners and apprentices have access to supportive interventions and useful opportunities to develop their resilience and character.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders work effectively with stakeholders to understand and plan for the skills needs in the region. They work closely with the M3 local enterprise partnership and chamber of commerce to share intelligence and respond to labour market needs. For example, leaders worked collaboratively with stakeholders to utilise the strategic development fund and local skills improvement fund to build programmes which meet key local needs, such as green skills in ultra-low carbon vehicles and retrofitting.

Managers work with stakeholders to design most programmes to reflect industry standards and norms. For example, brickwork tutors embed within the curriculum delivery new cladding techniques now used in the sector following the Grenfell fire. Following recommendations from tourism employers, staff changed modules in the travel and tourism curriculum to reflect new laws about working abroad. As a result, leaders and staff ensure learners and apprentices gain current knowledge and skills, which employers value. However, on some programmes, partnerships with employers are underdeveloped and, consequently, not all learners and apprentices benefit from employer input to their programmes.

Leaders work efficiently with local partners to identify where the college can most usefully provide appropriate programmes to meet local skills improvement plan's (LSIP) skills priorities. For example, leaders agreed with the department for work and pensions that the college would provide courses to facilitate employment for disadvantaged groups. For example, staff teach ESOL and IT courses mainly for refugees and asylum seekers and they teach sector-based work academy programmes courses to support the hospitality sector.

Leaders work collaboratively with other educational providers to ensure that they do not duplicate provision but do ensure gaps in LSIP's skills priorities are met. For example, leaders are working with a university to develop degree apprenticeships in motor sports, health, education and construction, providing excellent progression routes from college programmes.

Leaders work effectively with partners to address challenges and ensure they can plan and resource programmes well, so learners and apprentices learn sought after skills. For example, leaders collaborate proactively with other educational partners to address teaching shortages and improve teaching skills in Surrey. They organise joint teaching, learning and assessment conferences, where staff share best practice and learn how to teach in virtual classrooms. Creative media students benefit from weekly sessions at Weybridge Radio, where they learn aspects of radio broadcasting, such as scripting programmes, conducting interviews and creating sound effects.

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

Leaders provide an appropriate range of vocational and academic courses, which meet the needs of learners and local and national employers well. For example, leaders recognise the local need for skilled construction staff and work with employers to provide a range of learning programmes and apprenticeships in brickwork, carpentry and electrical installation and maintenance, to train skilled staff to meet those needs. As a result, most learners and apprentices develop skills, knowledge and behaviours that employers need.

Leaders and teachers are ambitious for their learners and apprentices, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with high needs. For example, teachers in level 3 extended diploma in sport ensure that learners with additional needs can complete all the practical tasks for the personal trainer qualification as well as their peers. As a result, most learners and apprentices achieve their qualifications and are ready to fulfil their personal ambitions.

Leaders and staff have designed well-planned curriculums, which build the knowledge and skills of learners and apprentices logically, based on what they know and can do. For example, level 1 hospitality and catering students learn about different ingredients and the key food groups first before preparing dishes. As a result, learners and apprentices gain confidence as they move from basic skills to more complex ones.

Well-qualified and experienced teachers use an appropriate range of effective strategies to ensure that learners have embedded their learning into long-term memory. They plan lessons which are effectively broken down into manageable chunks. They use a range of activities including small group work, quizzes and practical demonstrations to promote learning. As a result, most learners engage and maintain interest well in lessons and benefit from frequent revisiting of learning points.

Most teachers use assessment appropriately to identify what learners do well and where they can improve. They provide helpful feedback on their written and practical work. For example, in level 3 advanced manufacturing engineering, teachers provide useful written feedback, which is both congratulatory and provides advice on further improvement needed. As a result, most learners and apprentices improve their assignment marks and do not repeat mistakes.

However, teachers do not consistently use questioning well to promote engagement in lessons or check learning. As a result, too often teachers move on quickly without ensuring that learning has been understood and consolidated.

Leaders have not ensured consistent high-quality teaching or high levels of attendance for GCSE mathematics. For example, in some cases, tutors are too quick to fill the silence and do not wait for students to answer, nor do they target questions effectively. Leaders rightly recognise that initial timetabling challenges

are not yet all resolved, which is having a negative impact on attendance. As a result, too few learners achieve this essential qualification.

Leaders have designed adult programmes, which align clearly with local, regional and national skills needs. Leaders have created an ESOL curriculum, which equips learners with the language skills to communicate effectively and confidently in society and progress to further study and employment. In accountancy, leaders and staff support learners appropriately to acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to access employment opportunities in the accounting and finance sector, where there is a demand for qualified accounting professionals. As a result, most adult learners achieve their qualifications and progress to their chosen education or career aspirations.

Leaders and managers offer a range of vocational and technical level 2 and 3 apprenticeship programmes that meet the needs of employers and the local and regional economy. For example, they teach construction trades which LSIP identify as a key local need and they offer motor vehicle and automotive engineering programmes, building on the college's heritage in the motor sport field.

Leaders recruit apprentices appropriately. Qualified and experienced staff work well with employers to agree clear training plans suitable for their roles. Staff ensure that on- and off-the-job training are well aligned, so that apprentices practise and consolidate their learning in a timely manner. Most employers participate well in timely, helpful reviews. Consequently, staff and employers are clear about the progress their apprentices are making and know how to support them effectively when they need additional support.

Employers value the training that apprentices receive. Apprentices develop useful new knowledge, skills and behaviours. The vast majority of apprentices remain with their current employers with some progressing on to higher levels roles in their organisations.

Leaders have developed a series of purposeful pathways for learners with high needs. They work carefully with schools and stakeholders to plan an organised transition to the college's specialist facilities to ensure they meet learners' needs successfully. For example, the entry level 2 pathway supports this transition with modules on 'understanding relationships' and 'personal safety'. Staff ensure that learners with complex needs have swift access to the specialist interventions they require to participate in learning successfully, such as speech and language or occupational therapy. Staff provide an encouraging learning environment, where learners respond well to being treated as young adults and this promotes improvements in behaviour. As a result, learners with high needs move on to a range of positive destinations. Most remain at the college, with some moving on to vocational courses. Some progress to supported internships, employment or university.

Leaders ensure that learners and apprentices benefit from being taught by appropriately skilled and knowledgeable staff. Most teachers possess a suitable

teaching qualification, and leaders support those without a qualification to achieve one within an acceptable timeframe. Leaders provide staff with a range of relevant development opportunities that enhance their subject and teaching skills well. For example, high needs teachers improved the impact and consistency of their lesson starts. They videoed the start of their sessions, critically analysed them together and identified best practice, which they shared.

Leaders work closely with skilled and experienced governors to provide effective oversight. Leaders provide governors with sufficient, relevant information that help them fulfil their role well. For example, governors challenged leaders whether attendance targets were suitably robust. As a result, governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and monitor leaders' actions to drive further improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- The quality of teaching, and learners' attendance, in GCSE mathematics to ensure all learners achieve this qualification successfully.
- The quality of teachers' questioning skills to ensure all learners fully participate in lessons and consolidate their learning.
- Ensure all adult learners and apprentices have opportunities to develop their personal and social interests and behaviours.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130825
Address	Heath Road Weybridge Surrey KT13 8TT
Contact number	01932797700
Website	www.brooklands.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Christine Ricketts
Provider type	General Further Education
Date of previous inspection	10 to 13 December 2019
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Executive Director of Education, 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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