

# Inspection of Middlesbrough College

Inspection dates: 6 to 9 February 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</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

Middlesbrough College is a large provider of further education and skills in Teesside. The college provides education and training programmes for young people, adults and apprentices. The college has a main site in Middlesbrough which includes a sixth form centre; a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) centre; TTE Technical, a training provider; and an adult learning centre. Other centres are in Sunderland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne where the college provides apprenticeship provision.

At the time of the inspection, there were 4,287 learners on education programmes for young people, including T levels and the T-level foundation year. There were 1,304 learners on adult learning programmes, including Skills Bootcamps in preparing to teach, welding and, most recently, onshore wind. There were 1,150 apprentices across a range of apprenticeship standards and 151 learners with high needs on specialist and vocational pathways.

The college works with three subcontractors.

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

Learners and apprentices benefit from highly welcoming, inclusive and supportive learning and training environments. Staff promote a positive culture of respect and care which learners and apprentices appreciate. For example, on courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), staff recognise that learning can be daunting for learners who have little or no knowledge of basic English. Staff help learners to settle into learning swiftly by showing kindness, compassion and respect. Learners quickly build their confidence and develop language and literacy skills that help them to manage social and employment interactions in their new lives.

Learners and apprentices are supported very well to develop their confidence, sense of identity and character. They recognise the value of the 'Thrive' tutorial and personal development programme which helps them to improve their understanding of diversity, tolerance and respect. Through this programme, learners and apprentices gain an understanding of the importance of fundamental British values in relation to acting as responsible citizens. Learners feel safe from discrimination, bullying and harassment when attending the college.

Learners and apprentices develop a sense of citizenship and community pride by participating in social action projects. They demonstrate high levels of commitment to these projects, working as part of a team to negotiate and select projects that benefit others. Learners on A-level programmes work together to provide support for the homeless by conducting clothing drives and collecting food bank donations. Level 3 dental nurse apprentices take part in community action visits to schools to deliver oral health care to pupils. Learners and apprentices are rightly proud of the valuable contribution they make to the wider community.

Learners and apprentices enjoy their time at the college, which they demonstrate through very high attendance. Staff set clear expectations for learners' and apprentices' behaviour in and out of lessons. Therefore, learners and apprentices behave very well in college social and communal areas. They demonstrate respect for these environments and are highly considerate of others when studying quietly and responsibly in the many study spaces available to them.

On education programmes for young people, learners benefit from high-quality work experience. They make good use of the opportunities to develop the professional behaviours and attitudes needed to progress in their chosen subjects and gain valuable job-related skills. For example, learners studying aviation work with local airlines to understand what it is like to work in a busy airport environment.

Learners and apprentices benefit from very effective careers information, advice and guidance which prepares them fully for their next steps. Careers staff help learners and apprentices to prepare applications for university, apprenticeships or employment. Adult learners benefit from input from the National Careers Service, which has a dedicated support office in the adult learning centre. The significant majority of learners progress to positive destinations.

## **Contribution to meeting skills needs**

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders and managers engage very effectively with key stakeholders to understand the skills needs of the local, regional and national economy, and plan their curriculum accordingly. They collaborate closely with combined authorities and local councils in Teesside and surrounding areas to ensure that the college's priorities across all types of provision are aligned precisely with their stakeholders' strategic goals. As a result of this engagement and wider interactions with their stakeholders, such as the Department for Work and Pensions, community groups and charities, leaders ensure that those furthest away from employment and training are fully supported to develop their readiness for work.

Leaders are ambitious in their intent to provide education and training opportunities that respond to the skills needs of local, regional and national employers. They gain a very secure understanding of the skills needs of employers through the extensive range of employer advisory boards that they have established. They carefully assess and use information from advisory boards to review and modify the curriculum, ensuring it delivers the skills needed for the local economy to grow. For example, leaders have rapidly developed new provision and have modified existing provision using employer feedback in areas such as health and social care, construction and retrofit to ensure that the curriculum incorporates new and emerging trends.

Leaders and managers have developed strong partnerships with education leaders in local universities, colleges and schools. They work together as a consortium to ensure the education offer is coherent and avoids unnecessary duplication. Therefore, the college's vocational, academic and technical curriculum is well informed by partnership input that ensures a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

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

Leaders and managers maintain a continuous drive for improvement in the quality of teaching and training across all provision types. This strategic ambition is realised through the 'taking teaching higher' continuous professional development (CPD) programme which serves to develop teaching to a high standard. Adult learners, learners with high needs and apprentices benefit considerably from very high quality teaching and training. Leaders recognise that in the largest area of provision, education programmes for young people, a continued focus on CPD relating to teaching is needed to ensure that younger learners receive the same very high standard of teaching experienced by apprentices and adult learners.

Leaders and managers collaborate closely with employers and key stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious and current. They seek out and respond to employers' needs successfully, designing unique programmes that fill skills gaps in new and existing sectors. This ensures that learners and apprentices have routes to

sustainable employment in the region. For example, employers are instrumental in the design and implementation of the bespoke employer-led provision security programme. Adult learners gain accredited qualifications and demonstrate a strong understanding of the security sector, which employers need.

Leaders and managers successfully deliver bespoke Skills Bootcamp provision for adults who return to education. Programmes are designed with employers to ensure that learners gain the substantive new knowledge and skills that they need to work in schools and colleges as members of teaching staff or in engineering and manufacture industries. Learners progress swiftly into employment in high demand areas such as welding, following Skills Bootcamp training.

Learners and apprentices benefit from receiving training in vibrant learning environments that are very well resourced. Apprentices on STEM-related apprenticeships attend their on-the-job training in industry-standard facilities that showcase new and emerging sector technologies. Younger learners on T-level programmes in health and social care benefit from training in dedicated care suites which replicate hospital wards and adult day care environments. As a result, learners and apprentices are exposed to the world of work and are well prepared to progress into employment.

Leaders and managers ensure that teaching staff maintain their strong industry backgrounds. Tutors on T-level programmes in health and care maintain their Nursing and Midwifery Council registrations by attending 10 days of training in paediatric or general nursing. This enables them to apply the latest sector practice in their teaching. In level 3 aviation, teaching staff work part-time as cabin crew and use their experience and knowledge to help learners develop a deeper understanding of working in the travel and tourism industry.

Staff use information from their initial assessment of learners' starting points very effectively to plan, sequence and deliver learning and training. In specialist high needs provision, staff assess learners' starting points in a range of key areas such as cognition, processing, social skills, self-care and basic needs. They consider the strategies that are needed to break down any barriers to learning so that learners work towards and achieve their planned outcomes.

Tutors on adult learning programmes and apprenticeships successfully use a range of assessment strategies. They build in opportunities to revisit previous learning so that learners can make links between topics. For example, in pre-entry ESOL classes, tutors ensure that activities allow for repetition to develop fluency in key words before moving on to using full sentences. As a result, learners are supported to quickly master basic English and use language accurately when moving on to further areas of study.

In education programmes for young people, tutors use a range of effective teaching methods. In A-level mathematics, tutors check learning carefully for gaps in knowledge and understanding. Where they identify misconceptions, such as in how the use of mathematical reasoning sits behind the application of formulae, they take

time to explain concepts in detail. As a result, most learners gain the skills and knowledge that they need to apply complex theoretical reasoning to problem-solving.

Learners and apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from well targeted support and assistance which helps them easily access learning and training. Where learners and apprentices require practical support, they are provided with the resources that they need from the start of their programmes such as work translated into braille and the use of other assistive technologies.

Learners with high needs on vocational and academic programmes and in specialist provision benefit from extensive support from learning support assistants who ensure that learners understand what is being taught. As a result, learners with high needs make excellent progress in meeting the outcomes in their education, health and care plans. They make significant progress in improving their confidence and self-esteem, developing their communication and interaction skills so that they can work with other learners and with staff.

Tutors support adult learners and apprentices effectively to develop their English, mathematics and digital skills. Adult learners on access to higher education (health) programmes benefit from constructive feedback on their written work. Tutors tell them exactly how well they are developing the academic skills that they need to demonstrate when progressing to university. However, in a very few instances in education programmes for young people, spelling and grammatical errors go uncorrected. As a result, a few learners often repeat the same spelling mistakes.

Learners and apprentices produce a high standard of written and practical work. They make very good progress towards achieving their qualifications and acquire the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to be successful in their lives. The very large majority achieve highly and secure employment or progress to further study or higher education. All learners on the access to higher education (health) course secure university places and are very well prepared for the rigour of employment in the National Health Service and wider healthcare settings.

Leaders and managers care about their staff and are very considerate of their workloads and well-being. They have established staff workload forums that represent all areas of the college. Staff benefit from this responsive approach which enables issues to be addressed based on the differing needs of departments and individuals.

Leaders have effective arrangements in place to monitor the quality of education and training. They have addressed weaknesses in apprenticeship provision since the last inspection through the implementation of rigorous processes to improve quality, which have had a significant positive impact on the experience and success of apprentices. Leaders have a secure understanding of the subcontracted programmes through rigorous audits of the quality of provision and safeguarding arrangements.

Governors bring a wealth of expertise to the college which they use effectively to support and strengthen the senior leadership and shape the strategic direction of the college. They receive information about the performance of the college which they use to challenge leaders to maintain improvements, and they strive for the best possible outcomes for all learners, apprentices, residents and employers. Governors embody the values of the college and are relentless in their pursuit of excellence.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Maintain the strong emphasis on the quality of teaching and training so that all areas of provision are of a very high standard.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130570
<b>Address</b>	Middlehaven Dock Street Middlesbrough TS2 1AD
<b>Contact number</b>	01642 333333
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mbro.ac.uk">www.mbro.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Zoe Lewis
<b>Provider type</b>	General further education college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 to 14 September 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Uplift Associates Ltd Hope Foundation 3T Training Services Limited

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal quality and performance, 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

Chloe Rendall, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jacque Brown	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Dennis	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Seaman	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Reynolds-Golding	Ofsted Inspector
Pauline Hughes	Ofsted Inspector
Gavin Batty	Ofsted Inspector
Bev Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Tyrrell	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Barker	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Hunsley	Ofsted 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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