

Inspection of Barnet and Southgate College

Inspection dates: 19 to 22 November 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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	Outstanding
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Barnet and Southgate College (BSC) is a medium-sized, general further education college serving 8,150 learners, predominantly from the London Boroughs of Barnet and Enfield. The college has four main sites in High Barnet, Southgate, Colindale and Edmonton Green. Most learners are on full-time study programmes and adult learning programmes. A very small proportion of learners are on apprenticeships.

At the time of the inspection, there were 3298 young learners, 4755 adults and 97 apprentices studying at the college. Of these learners and apprentices, there were 421 learners with high needs funding. Approximately 55% of these learners were on mainstream programmes across all campuses. There were also cohorts of learners with profound and complex needs at Southgate campus (Pathway centre) accessing specialist provision.

The college provides education and training from entry level through to level 3 in a variety of vocational subjects across all sector subject areas. The largest subject area in the college is English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), followed by

courses in English, mathematics, construction, health and social care, early years and pre-employment training.

BSC subcontracts a small part of its adult and young learner provision to eight subcontractors. The largest subcontractor is Promise Training Limited.

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

Most learners and apprentices enjoy learning in inclusive and welcoming environments across all campuses. Learners from diverse backgrounds and cultures work well together and show mutual respect for each other's differences. Learners and apprentices, including those at subcontractors and employers, feel safe. They are motivated to learn and are proud to be part of the college.

Learners, including apprentices and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), have access to a broad personal development curriculum, which extends beyond their qualifications. For example, most young learners engage in a wide range of enrichment activities. Through their participation in tutorials, they develop a suitable understanding of topics, such as mental health, online safety, and consent. Staff reinforce important themes, such as healthy lifestyles and fundamental British values, through displays in classrooms and corridors. Most young learners feel well informed about important matters that affect their lives.

Apprentices gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours through their apprenticeships rapidly. They are taught well by teachers, who are experts in their subjects. Teachers use their industry expertise skilfully to enhance apprentices' learning experience. Apprentices learn advanced technical knowledge and improve their practical skills quickly. For example, gas operative apprentices learn how to safely install, commission, decommission, service and repair different gas appliances. A high proportion of apprentices achieve their apprenticeship and gain distinction and merit grades.

Learners with high needs improve in their confidence and independence through their studies. At the Pathway centre, teachers and support staff create a calm learning environment for learners with complex and profound learning disabilities. They support learners through structured and clear routines and visual schedules. Staff make effective use of symbols and visual aids to help learners process information and manage their behaviour. This helps learners to take part in learning activities and make good progress.

Adult learners study courses that help them to move into employment and improve their social interactions and life skills. Learners on ESOL courses improve their communication skills and gain the confidence to carry out tasks independently in their daily lives. Through vocational ESOL courses, such as ESOL for health and social care, they learn technical language specific to their sector of interest. Unemployed learners on employability courses develop essential skills, such as customer service skills, that help them to meet employers' needs.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders have carefully developed a broad curriculum offer that aligns well with the skills needs in their local and regional areas. Senior leaders take part in different

local and national skills forums and influence policies related to skills needs. They make effective use of a wide range of data on skills shortages and labour market information to respond to the strategic priorities of the local areas that they serve.

Leaders communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, such as the West London Alliance, local authorities, the Greater London Authority and employer networks. They work closely with other further and higher education providers, including Middlesex University, to create a broad choice of progression routes for learners in high-demand sectors, such as health and social care. Stakeholders value the positive contribution that leaders make to ensuring that there is a coherent offer of courses across the local area.

To meet local and regional skills needs, leaders have increased staffing capacity and enrolments in priority areas, such as health and social care, digital and creative, electrical and science. They have also prioritised investment in physical resources for priority subjects, such as the new creative and digital studio in Barnet. Learners benefit from learning in high-quality facilities that replicate current working practices in industry.

Leaders do not consistently involve external stakeholders in planning or teaching the curriculum across all subject areas. In subjects such as T levels for education and early years, and engineering, the involvement of stakeholders is limited to offering work placements and generic industry talks. In other areas, such as lean manufacturing and gas operative apprenticeships, staff work well with employers to tailor the content of courses to meet employers' specific needs. In partnership with local authorities, Job Centre Plus and local employers, staff teach different sector-based work academy programmes. This helps learners and apprentices acquire the most up-to-date skills needed for these industries and gain employment.

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

Leaders have a clear rationale for the courses that they offer. Curriculums are well designed to equip learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to move on to further education and/or gain employment. For example, in early years and supported teaching and learning in schools, teachers ensure that learners have a thorough understanding of different settings and the diverse needs of children in those settings. Learners understand how to adapt their teaching to meet the specific needs of the children that they work with. This helps learners to be more effective and impactful in their job roles.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved how they monitor learners' progress across the college. They have put in place suitable interventions and taken effective action to rectify weaknesses that had a negative impact on learners' retention and achievement. The proportion of learners who remain on courses has increased and is now high. Across most subjects, learners and apprentices achieve well. However, young learners' achievement in some subjects is low, particularly in engineering and a small number of A-level courses. In a few subjects, such as ESOL,

English and mathematics, learners' achievement is not high enough. Although learners' retention has improved in these areas, it is too early to see the full impact on learners' achievement.

In the Pathway centre, leaders provide highly effective and bespoke programmes for learners with complex, profound or multiple learning disabilities. Staff integrate therapies into the curriculum expertly and use therapeutic approaches to support learners. In both specialist and mainstream provision, support staff work closely with teachers to give learners essential support, specific to their individual needs. They use assistive technologies effectively to help learners take part in their studies and become more independent. Most learners with high needs meet their targets and achieve their qualifications in line with their peers.

Most teachers structure the content of each curriculum well. For example, in A-level psychology, teachers include research studies at the start of the course when teaching different approaches and theories of attachment. As a result, learners understand early on that psychology is a research-based discipline. They develop the skills they need to access research related to complex concepts, such as addiction in the second year.

Most teachers make good use of a range of techniques to teach their learners. They use clear explanations, demonstrations and presentations to help learners to master theoretical concepts and improve their practical skills. For example, in level 2 electrical installation, teachers demonstrate how to bend metal conduit effectively and give learners helpful tips on how to fine tune different installations. As a result, learners quickly grasp how to execute a range of installation techniques correctly.

Teachers use questioning techniques and online tools effectively to check learners' and apprentices' understanding. They use quizzes to assess what learners can recall and use questions well to challenge learners to think more deeply about what they have learned. Most learners and apprentices recall what they have learned and gain relevant knowledge and skills. In most instances, teachers give developmental feedback to learners and apprentices on their work. Consequently, most learners improve their work and produce work which is of a good standard.

In a few subjects, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to practise what they are taught. For example, in engineering lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge to practical tasks. In GCSE mathematics, a few teachers move through content too quickly. Consequently, learners do not develop a thorough understanding of what they have been taught.

Teachers plan assessments carefully throughout each course to support apprentices' progress. For example, in gas operative apprenticeships, teachers use effective assessment methods, such as observations and practical assessments throughout apprentices' training, to identify areas of strength and any weaknesses. Teachers plan further tasks and activities in topics that apprentices find difficult, to help them

fill gaps in their knowledge and skills. Most apprentices complete their qualifications and achieve highly.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have focused on improving learners' attendance and punctuality. Staff set high expectations for learners' attendance and punctuality and use suitable strategies to intervene when those expectations are not met. While overall attendance has slightly improved across the college, it is not consistently high in all subjects. For example, attendance is lower in English, mathematics and ESOL.

Across most courses, learners benefit from work-related activities that deepen their understanding of their subjects. For example, young learners on sports courses attend sports academies and clubs. They develop valuable coaching skills in a range of sports, including football, tennis and athletics. However, in a few subjects such as engineering learners have limited opportunities to complete meaningful work experience and do not have a clear enough understanding of the world of work.

Leaders ensure that learners and apprentices receive impartial careers advice and guidance that is specific to their individual needs. Staff provide learners with helpful information about different universities, apprenticeships and employment options. In addition, they help learners to create CVs, prepare for interviews and complete university applications. Most learners and apprentices feel well equipped to make choices about their next steps and successfully move on to further or higher education, or move into employment.

Since their previous inspection, leaders have increased their quality assurance activities that focus on improving the quality of teaching across the college. They conduct frequent compliance visits and observations of teaching at their subcontractors. They use information from these activities well to inform action plans and provide focused training to staff in areas where they require support. Staff feel they have suitable opportunities to develop their knowledge and improve their teaching practice.

Leaders have put in place highly effective governance arrangements. Governors have a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement of their provision. They provide rigorous challenge and support to leaders to improve the quality of teaching for learners and apprentices. Governors monitor leaders' progress against their improvement plans.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Increase the proportion of learners, particularly young learners, who achieve their qualifications in engineering, ESOL, English and mathematics.

- Provide meaningful work experience opportunities for learners in all subjects.
- Check learners' knowledge and understanding consistently well across all subjects.
- Continue to raise attendance in all subjects, particularly in ESOL, English and mathematics.

Provider details

Unique reference number 130425

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Website www.barnetsouthgate.ac.uk

Principal, CEO or equivalent Neil Coker

Provider type General further education college

Date of previous inspection 8 to 11 March 2022

Main subcontractors Promise Training Limited
London Community Kitchen CIC
Samafal Families Association Limited
Get Set Go Sport Limited
Imperium Sport Limited
Tottenham Hotspur Football & Athletic Co.
Limited
Wimbledon Experience Limited
Juventus Academy London-ELA Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, quality and student experience, 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.

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