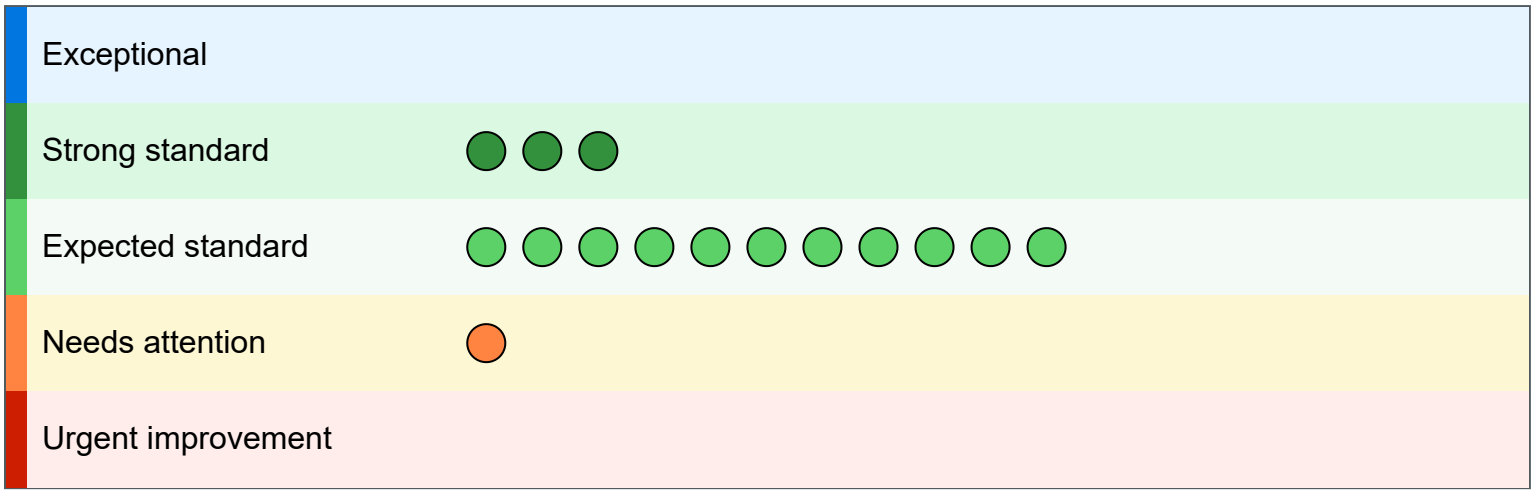
Shipley College

Address: Exhibition Road, Victoria Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire, BD18 3JW

Unique reference number (URN): 130534

Inspection report: 19 May 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, learners are made safer and feel safe.

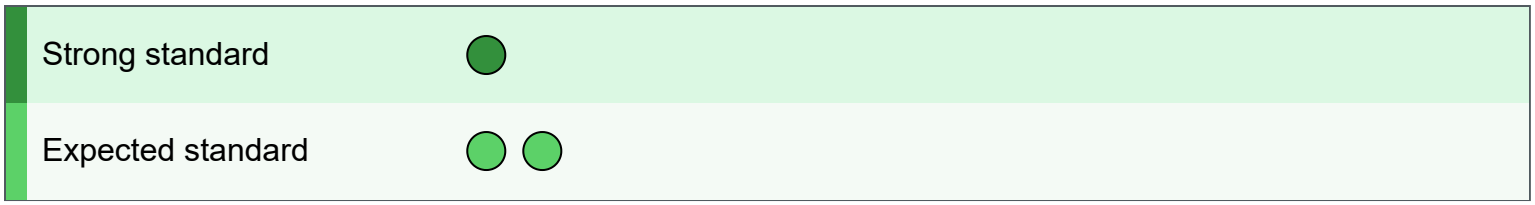
How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect providers for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The provider has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The provider has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

1. Inclusion, leadership and governance, and contribution to

meeting skills needs



Strong standard

Contribution to meeting skills needs

Strong standard

Leaders work very well with stakeholders and have a particularly clear understanding of the needs of the local communities in which they work. They are active participants of the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges, which considers current and future skills needs across the Bradford area and throughout the county. Leaders participate fully in the development and implementation of the local skills improvement plan and provide expertise in early years education, health and social care and creative industries.

Leaders work very effectively with community stakeholders to target the most disadvantaged learners and make learning more accessible. For example, working in partnership with local community groups, they use community venues for learners studying English for speakers of other languages that results in a high level of participation.

Leaders and managers involve stakeholders consistently in the development and delivery of the curriculums. They carefully plan the curriculums with employers to ensure learners and apprentices can develop the skills they need for the sectors in which they study. For example, in health and allied industries employers work collaboratively with teachers to design immersive learning resources that give learners and apprentices an insight in what it's like to work on a hospital ward. Employers provide frequent masterclasses in curriculum areas and set project briefs, including the production of promotional videos for the local space hub.

Learners and apprentices develop a significant range of new practical and technical skills consistently as a result of the work with stakeholders. In Esports, learners develop skills in event setup, green screen editing and using streaming software and digital tools professionally.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have a carefully planned approach to inclusion, underpinned by their commitment to all learners and apprentices being able to work in safe, supportive and inclusive environments, achieve and reach their full potential. They ensure that learners and apprentices have the support they need to participate in their education or training. Most learners and apprentices make appropriate progress towards their learning outcomes.

Leaders plan well for the early identification of learners' needs through thorough initial assessment and transition arrangements. In most instances, staff implement highly effective support swiftly to enable learners and apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other barriers to learning to make positive progress. However, a small proportion of learners and apprentices do not receive the support they need quickly enough, which impacts on their progress at the start of their programmes. For example, the very few apprentices with dyslexia, who need support to write down their ideas, do not have their requests for support processed quickly enough by the learning support service.

Staff review the support provided to learners and apprentices frequently to ensure that it remains meaningful and adapt it where needed. Wherever possible, staff reduce support to encourage learners to be independent in their studies.

Leaders provide a comprehensive training programme to staff to enable them to increase their understanding of the wide range of barriers that learners may face and how to provide support.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders and managers have an accurate overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They implement effective actions to make improvements across the college. Leaders have recently improved the quality of teaching in GCSE mathematics and increased the proportion of learners who stay on courses, including on a few level 3 study programmes and functional skills English and mathematics courses for adult learners.

Leaders provide a curriculum offer that meets the needs of the learners and employers in the local community and wider areas within Bradford. They design the curriculums successfully in partnership with local providers to avoid duplication of courses and to ensure the courses taught meet the needs of stakeholders.

Governors are successful in holding leaders to account for the quality of the provision. They use their expertise to provide effective challenge and support to leaders in the design of the curriculums, managing resources and ensuring learners make progress.

Leaders are considerate of staff workloads. They have established a culture of being supportive and developmental. Staff have the time and the tools to do their jobs effectively. Most staff talk about leaders and managers as being approachable and that they listen to their concerns listened and act on them. However, in a few instances staff feel that leaders do not listen to their concerns consistently. These staff do not feel sufficiently valued or supported by leaders.

Leaders provide well-considered, focused and targeted training for staff to help them to improve their teaching skills and subject knowledge. Advanced practitioners provide effective coaching and mentoring for teachers, new starters and for staff who need support.

2. Education programmes for young people

Expected standard

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

A high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications. However, too many learners on level 3 health and social care and level 3 business management left their course early in 2024/2025. Leaders have identified the reasons for this and taken effective action. As a result, a high proportion of learners have remained on these courses in the current academic year.

Learners typically develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected for their course and apply these effectively in their work. They produce work that meets the standards of their level of study, with level 3 learners being able to evaluate and apply theory, and level 2 learners producing accurate, knowledge-rich work. In GCSE English and mathematics, learners' work shows improving accuracy and structure over time.

Learners make positive progress from their starting points. In GCSE English and mathematics, most learners improve on their prior attainment, although outcomes in GCSE mathematics remain below national averages. Most learners progress to positive destinations, such as further training and employment.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders work in partnership with employers to design a curriculum offer to open the eyes of young people to the career opportunities available in Bradford and the surrounding areas. They raise aspirations of learners from low-attainment backgrounds through exposure to industry practice and career prospects.

Leaders and teachers ensure that learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other barriers to learning can participate fully in their studies. Teachers plan and implement effective strategies and adapt their approaches to support individual learners' needs. They use their knowledge of learners' starting points sensibly to build on what learners already know and ensure that they make progress.

Teachers use effective teaching strategies to help learners learn successfully. In T-level fashion and design, teachers use a well-chosen combination of videos, practical demonstrations and clear instructions to build learners' technical competence in pattern cutting. Learners learn to create shape in garments by manipulating darts in a bodice block that they then apply in future projects. On level 3 media studies, teachers use strategies effectively, such as peer review, research tasks, structured debates and collaborative whiteboard tasks to develop learners' knowledge and skills.

Teachers use frequent assessment to check learners' understanding and to refine their teaching. They use a range of assessment strategies well, such as asking learners to write answers on mini whiteboards, directed questioning and reviewing live work. In GCSE English and mathematics, teachers use in-class sample questions and model answers, papers and mock examinations skilfully to identify areas that learners need to work on and to prepare them for examinations.

Teachers provide helpful and precise feedback to learners, who act on it quickly to correct and improve their work. However, in GCSE English and Esports, in a few instances, teachers provide feedback that is too vague and which does not guide learners to know precisely how to improve.

Teachers ensure that learners develop and use the specialist terminology associated with their subject accurately and in context. This builds learners' confidence and communication skills, when working in a specialist environment, and prepares them well for future employment and study.

Participation and development

Expected standard

Staff create a calm and purposeful environment, where they set clear expectations for learners' behaviour and conduct. Learners behave well in lessons and around the campus. Leaders have created a culture of respect and community, where learners and staff build trust and respect for each other. Learners know that inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated by staff.

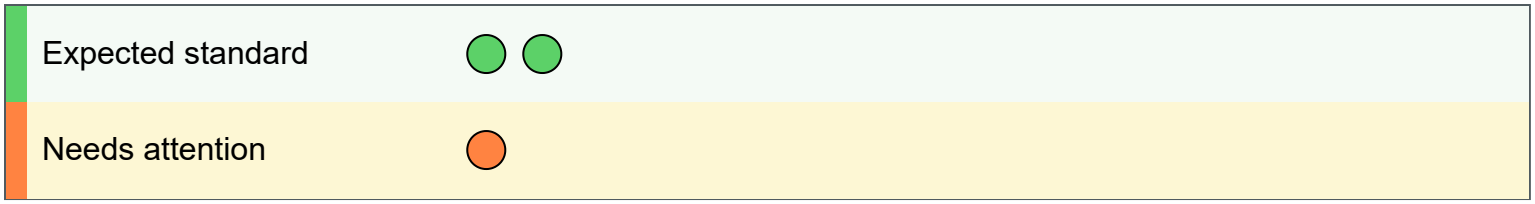
Most learners attend well and are punctual. Where learners have low attendance, they make good progress in improving it from their starting points. Teachers use highly individualised strategies to improve attendance that are considerate to learners' circumstances. A high proportion of learners at the college face significant barriers during their educational journey.

Most learners benefit from well-planned work experience that aligns with their future career aspirations and supports them in their next steps. Staff ensure that learners have exciting opportunities to engage with employers. Learners benefit from taking part in useful and varied employer-led projects. For example, learners on level 3 media have created a professional video to raise awareness of endometriosis for a local charity.

Learners have clear plans for the future and are supported well by the careers team and their tutors to reach their aspirations. Most learners have positive destinations.

Learners know about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and the way in which vulnerable people can be groomed online and drawn into extremism. However, learners are less well informed about local risks where they live and study.

3. Adult learning programmes



Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders and managers work very effectively with key stakeholders to ensure that the curriculums they offer meet the needs of the most disadvantaged communities in the areas they serve. They have formed successful partnerships with a range of community stakeholders to host courses in outreach centres in the most deprived wards in the area.

Leaders and managers have developed a flexible delivery model, combining face-to-face teaching with online learning. This enables learners to access programmes in a way that fits around their family and work commitments.

Teachers are well-qualified in their subjects and as teaching practitioners. They plan learning activities well and use a wide range of strategies to help learners understand what is being taught. For example, teachers break complex tasks into smaller steps. They ask learners to repeat tasks to help consolidate their learning.

Teachers enliven learning with well-chosen examples to help learners understand how to apply their learning. For example, when talking about healthy diets, teachers on the teaching assistant course encourage learners to reflect on how poverty can impact on children's diets and the roles schools play in providing nutritious food.

Teachers use the information they collect at initial assessment well to create meaningful individual targets to tackle learners' areas for development. They follow these up assiduously through frequent on-course assessment, where improvements are consolidated.

Teachers have a good understanding of learners' individual circumstances. They provide patient, sensitive and encouraging support for those with mental health problems and those in recovery from addiction. Learners grow in confidence, remain engaged in their studies and begin to identify next steps for their education and future employment.

Participation and development

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that learners work in safe and respectful environments. Staff model and reinforce professional behaviour. Learners are engaged, work well together and demonstrate positive behaviour.

Leaders plan programmes well to enable learners to participate while also meeting their childcare commitments. Most learners attend their classes well, either in person or online. However, a small proportion of learners do not attend functional skills English and mathematics lessons sufficiently well. Teachers know the reasons for learners' non-attendance, most of which are unavoidable. They ensure that they follow up on learners who miss a class and provide them with work to help them catch up.

Learners are well prepared for their next steps. They quickly develop confidence in their ability to learn and succeed and many progress between courses. Learners develop wider employability skills such as teamwork. They receive good careers information and guidance, whether studying on the central campus or in outreach centres.

Learners know how to keep themselves safe. They develop a secure understanding of safeguarding, including how to report concerns. Most learners develop an appropriate understanding of fundamental British values and the risks of extremism and radicalisation.

Teachers liaise closely with partners, including sheltered housing charities, to support learners' attendance and emotional well-being. This strong collaboration helps learners remain on programme and make secure progress.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Learners do not achieve sufficiently well. The overall achievement rate for adult learners in 2024/2025 was below the national rate for all levels of learning. Not enough learners achieved their English and mathematics functional skills qualifications. Leaders have implemented appropriate actions to improve achievement. They have focused successfully on improving teaching in English and mathematics and have prioritised improving the attendance of learners. Where learners can not attend, staff support them well to catch up. Early indications in 2025/2026 show that learners make positive progress. However, it is too soon to see the overall impact of leaders' actions.

Learners, most of whom have low starting points, develop new knowledge, skills and personal confidence. For example, learners enrolled on English for speakers of other languages become confident to communicate for themselves when they meet with their children's teachers rather than relying on family members to communicate for them.

Teachers prepare learners well for their next steps into employment. Learners develop teamworking skills and the ability to make decisions under stress on courses for those taking up roles in the railway industry.

Most learners progress onto further learning at a higher level or secure employment after studying at the college.

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4. Apprenticeships

Expected standard

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Most apprentices, including those with barriers to learning, make positive progress from their starting points. Apprentices who complete their programmes achieve their qualifications. Leaders monitor the progress of apprentices very carefully. Where apprentices fall behind, they implement helpful interventions to support them to catch up quickly, working collaboratively with their employer.

Apprentices acquire significant new knowledge and skills. For example, apprentices on the teaching assistant apprenticeship develop their knowledge of the range of tools and strategies available to use in the classroom with children who are not at the required milestone in terms of development. The quality of apprentices' work is of a high standard and clearly demonstrates their practice evolving over time. It is professionally presented and level 3 apprentices' work is accurately referenced and cited.

Most apprentices are well prepared for and progress to positive destinations. They often advance to higher-level training and receive promotions and take on extra responsibilities at work.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Teachers plan and teach the curriculums in a sensible order. For example, apprentices on the early years apprenticeship learn about the foundations of effective communication with children before moving on to more complex technical communication topics.

Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their fields. They use their knowledge to support apprentices effectively to gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their chosen industry. Teachers train apprentices well, using effective teaching strategies to engage, excite and broaden apprentices' knowledge. They encourage apprentices to discuss topics in sessions to bring them to life. Apprentices discuss their experiences at work and how they implement theories into practice in the workplace.

Teachers and employers plan on- and off-the-job training well. On the early years apprenticeship, teachers provide opportunities for apprentices to take examples from lessons into their practice at work. For example, apprentices reflect on how the special educational needs and disability code of practice works in their settings. On the teaching assistant course, apprentices share examples of tools to help children in the classroom, who may not meet the child development learning milestones.

Leaders have ensured that the apprenticeship curriculums are inclusive and accessible for apprentices. Staff know their apprentices well and use effective adaptive strategies to engage them and to help them make appropriate progress.

Teachers use a range of assessment methods effectively to check apprentices' understanding. They mostly provide constructive feedback to enable apprentices to improve their work further. However, in a few instances teachers do not mark apprentices' work quickly enough and feedback is not sufficiently clear or precise.

Participation and development

Expected standard

Leaders and staff create supportive and safe environments, where apprentices learn. Apprentices feel welcome at the college and appreciate that staff check on their wellbeing frequently.

Apprentices are respectful and professional and show a positive work and learning ethic. They attend well and leaders work successfully with employers to provide support on the rare occasions that apprentices do not attend. Apprentices are confident, skilled and valued by their employers.

Apprentices receive suitable careers advice and guidance. Most apprentices understand their next steps and are clear about the progression routes open to them. For example, adult care worker apprentices are knowledgeable about their nursing journey either in specialising in dementia or in general nursing.

Most apprentices develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values, and radicalisation and extremism. They recognise the signs to look out for and what to do if they have concerns.

Apprentices on early years and teaching assistant apprentices develop a wider understanding of the socio-economic challenges in Bradford and the impact this has on child development. They recognise that Bradford is low in school attainment compared to other areas and the important role they play is tackling this.

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5. Provision for learners with high needs

Strong standard	
Expected standard	

Strong standard

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders design the curriculum to be closely aligned to learners' education, health and care plans, personal targets and aspirations. Teachers logically sequence learning pathways that support the progressive development of learners' knowledge, skills and behaviours. Leaders adapt the curriculum well in response to quality assurance findings and employer feedback. For example, they introduced additional employability sessions to further develop learners' communication, teamwork and time management skills.

Leaders ensure that the provision is highly personalised and inclusive. Teachers and support staff use highly successful strategies and targeted interventions to help learners overcome barriers to learning and make sustained progress in all aspects of their learning. Teachers use a range of highly effective teaching strategies to help learners learn. For example, in independence sessions where learners make cakes for college events, teachers use clear step-by-step demonstrations. They repeat these demonstrations multiple times to reinforce the information with learners. Teachers use very clear explanations to accompany the demonstrations to strengthen learners' understanding and enable them to complete the learning activities with minimal levels of support. Learners complete tasks with increasing independence and high levels of autonomy.

Leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching in GCSE mathematics recently. They have implemented highly effective coaching and mentoring to teachers identified as needing further support.

Most teachers rigorously assess learners' understanding in lessons and provide high-quality, constructive and developmental feedback. This helps learners strengthen and consolidate their knowledge and skills, which further enhances their rapid progress.

Support staff are highly knowledgeable and provide high-quality support both in and outside of lessons, which helps to increase learners' confidence and independence over time.

Leaders provide highly effective training to staff to further improve their teaching skills. They use information from lesson visits to inform training, which includes autism awareness and neurodiversity.

Participation and development

Strong standard

Leaders provide strong strategic leadership to ensure that learning environments are safe, welcoming and highly inclusive for learners. Staff prioritise learners' physical and emotional wellbeing through highly personalised support that promotes confidence, progress and independence. Relationships between learners and staff are respectful and supportive.

Learners demonstrate exemplary behaviour, attitudes and participation in college and workplace settings. Their attendance is very high. Staff use effective interventions, such as wellbeing support, home visits and personalised timetables, to re-engage learners when required.

Learners with high needs understand how to stay safe online and in the workplace. They know how to report concerns related to bullying and harassment. Learners are aware of the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation

Learners develop their understanding of key themes including fundamental British values and equality and diversity. They apply these values consistently in their daily lives, including at college and in the workplace.

Learners benefit from comprehensive wider opportunities, including enrichment activities and community projects. These enable learners to develop employability skills, confidence and independence. Learners benefit from visits to local businesses to help them understand workplace expectations and career pathways. Learners with high needs are very well prepared for their next steps into employment, supported internships and further study.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Most learners achieve well and make sustained progress from their starting points. Learners in specialist provision have very high rates of achievement for accredited qualifications. In GCSE English and mathematics, most learners improve on their prior attainment, although outcomes in GCSE mathematics remained below national averages in 2024/2025. Leaders have recently improved the quality of teaching in GCSE mathematics, but it is too early to see the impact in examination outcomes.

Learners develop a wide range of employability and independence skills, including communication, teamwork and interview skills. These prepare them well for transition to adulthood and future employment. Learners develop their English and mathematical skills confidently in lessons and workplaces. Supported interns apply their mathematical skills effectively to calculate manufacturing output.

Staff prepare learners well for their next steps through highly personalised support, careers guidance and comprehensive annual reviews involving parents, carers and employers. Learners progress to positive destinations, including supported internships, employment and further study.

What it's like to be a learner and/or an apprentice at this provider

Learners and apprentices work in a highly inclusive environment that enables them to reach their full potential. Most learners and apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other barriers to learning are supported well to access the curriculums and to make the progress of which they are capable. For example, teachers provide personalised support to learners with autism. They focus on routine, where learners need it to reduce anxiety, ensuring that learners are aware of what their day will consist of. Teachers use visual timetables to support learners and ensure that whenever there is a new task they sit

with learners initially and repeat instructions. Over time, learners' anxiety reduces and they are less dependent on teachers.

Learners and apprentices value the culture of mutual trust and community that staff at the college create. They replicate the professional behaviours that staff demonstrate and thrive in a calm and purposeful environment. Adult learners welcome the provision of courses in the rural community and appreciate the mix of online and face-to-face learning that enables them to attend lessons around their personal commitments.

Learners and apprentices benefit from high-quality teaching during their time at college. Learners with high needs benefit from particularly high-quality teaching. Most learners and apprentices make positive progress from their starting points and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to go to the next stage of their lives. For example, learners with high needs increase in confidence and self-esteem and become more independent.

Most learners and apprentices achieve their vocational qualifications. Leaders, aware that the achievement of young learners and learners with high needs needs to improve in GCSE mathematics, have taken positive steps to ensure current learners have a positive experience. Adult learners appreciate the actions that leaders have taken to improve their achievement of functional skills English and mathematics qualifications.

Learners and apprentices receive useful careers information to help them decide on their next steps. Learners with high needs receive highly bespoke careers support and receive valuable input from parents, carers and employers during annual reviews. Most apprentices are clear about the potential progression routes they can follow. For example, adult care worker apprentices have a good understanding of their nursing journey and that they can work in general nursing or specialise in mental health or dementia.

Most learners and apprentices have a good understanding of the potential risks they face in the community in which they live, work and study. They understand the increased risk of being radicalised online and how to keep themselves safe. Young learners and apprentices and learners with high needs learn about what constitutes a healthy and unhealthy relationship and the meaning of consent. Most learners and apprentices have a thorough understanding of fundamental British values and why they are important to learn about. They demonstrate high levels of respect to one another in a highly diverse community, which leads to learners and apprentices feeling safe.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to improve the attendance of learners on study programmes.
- Leaders should further develop the understanding that learners on study programmes have of local safeguarding risks.
- Leaders should ensure that all young learners and apprentices benefit from clear and developmental written feedback, where this is provided, so that they understand how to improve their work further.
- Leaders should continue to take action to increase the proportion of learners who stay until the end of level 3 study programmes and achieve their qualifications.

- Leaders should continue to implement the actions they have taken to improve teaching in GCSE mathematics to learners on study programmes and learners with high needs.
- Leaders should continue to implement improvement actions to increase the proportion of learners achieving functional skills English and mathematics qualifications.
- Leaders should ensure that they communicate with all staff and listen to their concerns.

About this inspection

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with learners, apprentices, leaders, staff, employers, governors and external stakeholders during the inspection.

Shipley College is a small general further education college based in Saltaire, near Shipley. The college provides courses and training for young people enrolled on study programmes, learners with high needs, adult learners and apprentices from pre-entry level to level 7. Most courses are entry level to level 3 but there are a small number of higher-level courses, including a post-graduate certificate in education.

At the time of the inspection, there were 923 young learners enrolled on vocational study programmes, 206 learners with high needs, 1011 adult learners and 83 apprentices. The largest subject area for young people enrolled on study programmes was health and social care and most learners with high needs were in the specialist provision for these learners. A high proportion of adult learners were enrolled on courses for English speakers of other languages, and most apprentices were enrolled on level 3 teaching assistant and level 2 early years practitioner apprenticeships.

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Alison Gray, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

This data is from 19 May 2026

Number of learners

Total learners

2,223

Education programmes for young people

923

Adult learning programmes

1011

Apprenticeships

83

Provision for learners with high needs

206

Percentage of learning aims successfully achieved

Education programmes for young people

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	84	84	Close to average
2023/24	84	83	Close to average
2022/23	84	81	Close to average

Adult learning programmes

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	78	87	Close to average
2023/24	80	87	Close to average
2022/23	82	87	Close to average

Apprenticeships overall achievement rate

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	60	65	Close to average
2023/24	61	60	Close to average
2022/23	66	55	Above

Apprenticeships pass rate

Year	This provider	National average
2024/25	98	98
2023/24	96	98
2022/23	99	97

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.

Strong standard 🟢

The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 🟢

The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention 🟠

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 🔴

The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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