

Bishop Burton College

Inspection report

Provider reference 130584

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Bishop Burton is a specialist further and higher education college which operates from a main campus near the market town of Beverley in East Yorkshire and a centre in Driffield, East Yorkshire. The college's 409 hectares includes 356 hectares of arable crops and grassland and 34 hectares of woodland, sports fields and amenity areas.
2. The college primarily serves the areas of Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire but recruits regionally, nationally and internationally to its specialist provision. In the immediate catchment area of the college there are areas of significant deprivation. In 2007, the number of pupils gaining five A* to C passes in GCSE was significantly lower than the national average of 46.8%. Almost a third of all adults have literacy and numeracy needs. The unemployment rate of 8.2% is above the national rate of 5.5%.
3. Bishop Burton College offers courses in eight sector subject areas, including health, public services and care; construction, planning and the built environment; engineering and manufacturing; leisure, travel and tourism; arts, media and publishing; preparation for life and work; and business, administration and law, leading to qualifications from pre-entry level to higher education (HE). The largest subject area is agriculture, horticulture and animal care with around 640 learners enrolled on these courses. In 2008/09, the college enrolled about 1,300 further education (FE) learners, most of whom attended full time. The college's recruitment of learners aged 16 to 18 has grown by approximately 60% over the last three years; there are now over 1,000 learners aged 16 to 18. In 2008/09, 25% of learners had identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some 140 adult learners enrolled on part-time courses, mostly at level 2. The college has 870 HE learners. It provides work-based learning for around 980 learners; of these 270 were on apprenticeship programmes and around 710 on Train to Gain (T2G). The college works with 24 secondary schools to provide vocational programmes for around 500 14 to 16-year-olds. There are residential facilities for 340 learners. The college has Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for agriculture and for equine provision.
4. The college mission statement is 'to be the college of choice for learners and business, providing first class skills development within a dynamic rural environment'. It has four core values which describe the college's drive for excellence.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates in 2007/08 were mostly at or above the national average and were high for adults at level 1. Success rates improved in 2007/08. Retention rates in 2008/09 are high. Key skills success rates have improved but significant differences between skills and levels remain. Success rates for work-based learners are now good. Learners' attendance is satisfactory. They develop good vocational skills and many gain additional vocational qualifications. The college promotes safe and healthy working well.
6. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers make very good use of the wide range of excellent resources including the farm and estate to support learning. In less effective lessons there is insufficient challenge for learners and planning to meet the needs of individual learners is ineffective. Learners' additional needs are met well. Assessment is planned well. Assessment practices are generally satisfactory and outcomes recorded effectively. Parents and carers are well informed.
7. The college meets the needs of its learners outstandingly well. It has developed its curriculum very well in response to local and national priorities. There has been a significant increase in the numbers of 16 to 18-year-old learners, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at risk of not being in education, employment or training (NEET). Progression routes are well used. Curriculum enrichment is good. Learners make a good contribution to the life of the college and the local community.
8. Support for learners is outstanding. Information, advice and guidance for prospective learners and those progressing to other courses are very good. Residential facilities and a comprehensive transport system reduce barriers to learning. External agencies are used well to support learners. Educational and social inclusion are good.
9. Leadership and management are good. The principal, governors and senior managers set a clear direction for the college. They strive for excellence and to provide learners with a high quality experience. The college has made impressive investments in the campus and teaching and learning resources. These are of exceptionally high quality and used well. Teachers are well qualified and many have good industry experience.
10. Recent action has raised retention and success rates for learners in most areas. Governors are highly committed; they provide good support and challenge to college managers. Financial management is strong and value for money is good.

11. Equality of opportunity is good. Learners appreciate the safe, secure and supportive college environment. The college meets the statutory requirement for safeguarding. Themed weeks promote equality and diversity well but there is insufficient promotion through tutorials and the vocational curriculum.
12. The college has well established and comprehensive quality assurance arrangements. However, some aspects of quality assurance, including the processes to observe and improve teaching and learning, are insufficiently rigorous.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

13. The college's capacity to improve is good. The principal, governors and senior managers set a clear direction and are persistent in seeking improvements. Recent actions to improve retention rates have been successful. The college has successfully redesigned its curriculum to better meet local and regional needs and has made a good contribution to reducing the NEET cohort. There has been significant well managed campus development.
14. The college is committed to improving the learner's experience and has comprehensive quality assurance arrangements. However, inspectors judged the self-assessment report to be insufficiently self-critical.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

15. This is a good college. The college has made satisfactory progress in maintaining most strengths and rectifying areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Success rates for learners, including work-based learners have recently improved and are good. The coordination and management of numeracy, literacy and key skills and work-based learning are good. Improvements to the campus provide outstanding learning resources. The college has yet to fully address improvements in target setting for learners. However, the strengths related to self-assessment noted at the last inspection have not been fully maintained. The self-assessment and quality improvement processes, particularly those related to teaching and learning, lack rigour.

Key strengths

- clear strategic direction
- exceptionally high quality resources used well to benefit learners
- strong financial management
- excellent employer engagement and partnership working
- outstanding learner support
- good curriculum enrichment
- excellent range of courses to meet the needs of the wider community
- very effective information, advice and guidance.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- rigour of the quality assurance processes relating to teaching and assessment
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the accuracy of self-assessment.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

16. Achievement and standards are good. This does not agree with the college's judgement in the self-assessment report that they are outstanding. Some strengths in relation to learners' outcomes are overstated and some areas for development have not been included, although they have been identified by the college and action taken to rectify them. The use of the previous year's national averages as comparators, without reference to their upward trend, has led the college to take a more positive view of its success rates than that taken by inspectors.
17. The college's long course success rate has increased in line with the rise in the national rate in the three years to 2007/08 and is slightly above this rate. The rate for adults has been above the national average in each of these years; that for learners aged 16 to 18 has been slightly below. Success rates were high at levels 1 and 3 for adults in 2007/08 and below average at level 1 for learners aged 16 to 18 in this year.
18. For learners aged 19 and over there were rising success rates at all levels in 2008. The success rate was above comparable national rates for specialist and non-specialist provision at almost all levels and particularly high at level 1.
19. College data for 2008/09 show a continued improvement. Retention is now high, particularly for 16 to 18-year-old learners at level 1 where it is currently 96%. The progress 16 to 18-year-old learners made at level 3, compared to their qualifications on entry, was poor in 2007/08 particularly on national diplomas. The college implemented robust actions in 2008/09 and results to date show learners are making much better progress.
20. Key skills success rates have shown an improving trend since 2005/06. However, there are still inconsistencies in the success rates between learners on different courses and different key skills. Overall and timely work-based learning success rates have improved steadily. Current data show that work-based learning success rates are good except timely success rates for advanced apprentices which are satisfactory. National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) achievement by T2G learners improved in 2008/09 and is good. Achievement for 14 to 16-year-old learners is high and progression rates into the college are improving.
21. There are no major differences between the performance of different groups of learners when compared by gender or ethnicity. Learners with health problems or disabilities do as well or better than their peers and those learners receiving additional learning support do very well.
22. The attendance of learners in college is satisfactory. Learners greatly enjoy coming to college and their behaviour is very good. Learners' work is of a

satisfactory or better standard. There are many examples of learners achieving prestigious awards, such as a female learner achieving the regional LSC's agriculture award and an engineering apprentice winning an overall best apprentice regional award. Learners develop good levels of skill and gain a wide variety of additional vocational qualifications.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

23. The quality of provision is good. Inspectors used a range of evidence, including lesson observations and the outcomes of the college's own lesson observation process, to conclude that teaching and learning are satisfactory. The college has invested significantly in improving teaching and learning. Procedures for the observation of teaching and learning (OTL) are well established; however, the process is insufficiently rigorous and the college has an overly positive view of the quality of teaching and learning. Observers often overestimate the strengths of the observed session and the grading is too generous. The arrangements for validating judgements are insufficiently robust. Teachers awarded satisfactory or inadequate teaching grades are supported well to help them improve. Following observation, line managers complete action plans for improvement but there is no record of when these actions are completed. The outcomes of the OTL process inform staff development appropriately and good practice is shared effectively.
24. Learning resources are very good; the learning resources centre is well equipped and well used by learners. The use of information learning technology (ILT) and of the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) to support learning is increasing. Teachers make very good use of the wide range of specialist resources such as the equine arena, the animal management unit and the farm and estate to support learning.
25. The better lessons include a range of learning activities; learners are fully involved and theory and practice are well integrated. Teachers utilise their vocational experience to make learning relevant. Inspectors agree with the college that planning for differentiation is an area for improvement. In less effective lessons there are insufficient strategies deployed to meet the needs of each learner. As a result, for example, more able learners are not challenged enough. Questions are insufficiently focused and are not always used to check and extend learning. Practical sessions for national diploma learners are well managed but are not used well enough to develop higher level skills such as planning and evaluation. Short-term targets for learners are of variable usefulness; some are clear but others are too vague. On-the-job training for work-based learners is good.
26. Arrangements for key skills have improved. Key skills teaching is appropriately related to learners' vocational learning. Initial assessment identifies learners' individual needs at an early stage. Staff use this information effectively to provide additional support where appropriate.
27. Assessment practices are generally satisfactory. Assessment schedules are well planned and learners' progress is well recorded. However, inspectors identified

examples where work is not marked accurately, assignment briefs contain insufficient guidance and feedback is not sufficiently detailed for learners to know exactly what they have to do to improve. These issues were not identified by the college's quality improvement activities.

28. Parents and carers find the college supportive and approachable. Parents evenings, celebration events, regular progress reports and informal contact ensure they are well informed.
29. Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that its approach to meeting the needs and interests of its learners is outstanding. The college uses its excellent links with schools and employers very effectively to inform the development of provision which meets local and national priorities and widens participation. Provision has been changed successfully to meet government strategies. For example, the recruitment of adult learners has reduced, the number of learners aged 16 to 19 increased and the college made a successful contribution to reducing the NEET group. A very wide range of relevant courses is provided to meet the diverse needs of its learners. Good curriculum planning provides well-used progression routes. The college's excellent and mature partnerships with schools have led to the sharing of resources and other benefits. School pupils, for example, access college courses; college learners take additional qualifications on school premises and staff share practice. The college makes good use of practising professionals to enhance its programmes. Learners' success is celebrated widely. Curriculum enrichment is good; many learners achieve additional relevant vocational qualifications. However, enrichment activities are not always available or well publicised to all learners. Learners make a valuable contribution to the local community through voluntary and commercial work, collaboration in community ventures and fund raising.
30. The approach to educational and social inclusion is good. Diversification of the curriculum has enabled the college to successfully increase participation by learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Around 60% of learners aged 16 to 18 receive educational maintenance awards. Residential facilities and a comprehensive transport system help to remove barriers to participation in learning. Participation by learners with particular needs is good and the college meets their needs well. These learners make very good progress. Teachers do not differentiate well enough in lessons to meet the needs of the diverse group learners. Teaching and learning materials are not used effectively to promote equality and diversity.
31. As stated in the self-assessment, support for learners is outstanding. The college provides high quality personal and academic support which meets the needs of its learners very well. The college has very good mechanisms to identify support needs quickly. A team of specialist counsellors, learning mentors, specialist support staff, note-takers and tutors meet these needs in the best possible way for individual learners. Tutorials are well planned and integrated with a wider support programme to meet learners' needs. Every Child Matters themes are included. Learners' progress is reviewed regularly; however, targets set at review do not always provide sufficient detail to help learners improve. The college supports the large number of learners with

learning difficulties and/or disabilities very effectively, enabling them to play a full and active role in college life. Strong partnerships with external agencies help provide support promptly.

32. The information, advice and guidance provided to prospective learners and to learners progressing to higher level courses are highly effective. An attractive and informative prospectus informs learners about course and entry criteria. Taster days allow prospective learners to experience college life. Parents and carers are welcomed to career and progression events and value these opportunities.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

33. Leadership and management are good. The principal, governors and senior managers set a clear direction for the college, striving for excellence and providing learners with a high quality experience. Communication within the college is effective. Staff have a good understanding of, and are in agreement with, college strategic aims and values.
34. Recent actions to increase retention rates have been effective. College data for 2008/09 show significant improvement. A more robust tracking system has been implemented and also shows much improved learner progress for 2008/09. Although key skills success rates have improved there is still too much variation between the rates across courses.
35. Partnership arrangements with local schools are very productive. The college is a key partner in local and regional developments and leads on the development of the environmental and land-based diploma. Employer engagement is particularly strong.
36. The college provides high quality accommodation, specialist equipment and resources to the benefit of learners. It has made significant investment in campus development with capital projects completed on time and within budget. New developments link closely with the college's strategic priorities and are part of a well considered and comprehensive approach to redevelopment. Learners benefit from excellent specialist facilities. FE learners benefit from access to some high quality HE facilities. The new learning resource centre provides good access to information and communication technology (ICT). On and off-the-job learning resources for work-based learners are good. The college environment strongly promotes safe and healthy working. Teaching staff are well qualified and have good industry expertise. Appraisal is effective and informs the wide range of staff development activities provided throughout the year.
37. The corporation meets frequently; governors are highly committed and supportive. They provide appropriate challenge for the principal and senior

managers. There is a good match between the valuable and diverse skills of the governors and the sectors served by the college. Staff value the effective 'link governor' programme. Financial management is strong; governors and the finance executive closely monitor the college's financial position. The college provides good value for money.

38. Equality of opportunity is good. The college has a strong ethos of mutual respect. Learners appreciate the safe, secure and supportive environment in which they learn. An equality and diversity committee, including learner representation, is developing arrangements effectively. Staff training and updating for safeguarding, child protection, looked after children and equality and diversity are mandatory aspects of staff development. Themed week activities provide innovative approaches to the promotion of equality and diversity although promotion through tutorials and the vocational curriculum is less well developed. In work-based learning the promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.
39. The college's response to legislative requirements for equalities in race, gender and disability is good. Equality impact assessments are well established and lead to improvement. Facilities for learners with restricted mobility, particularly in new buildings, are very good. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Governors have undertaken appropriate training in their responsibilities.
40. The college is strongly committed to continually improving the learner experience and has comprehensive quality assurance arrangements. Learners and employers are represented on annual course reviews. Access to accurate management information is good although it is not always used to best effect. Some aspects of quality assurance and self-assessment are insufficiently rigorous. The college has been slow to identify and deal with critical issues impacting on learners' experience in two subject areas. Inspectors were unable to confirm the accuracy of the internal observations of teaching and learning. Internal verification is not always effective in identifying issues with written assessment and assessment feedback.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 1	05/06	489	75	78	-3	196	80	64	16
	06/07	515	86	82	4	419	82	76	6
	07/08	545	81			140	90		
NVQs	05/06	9	100	72	28	9	56	64	-8
	06/07	37	84	79	5	7	100	79	21
	07/08	61	82			7	86		
Other	05/06	480	74	78	-4	187	81	64	17
	06/07	478	86	82	4	412	81	76	5
	07/08	484	80			133	90		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 2	05/06	266	75	73	2	172	65	66	-1
	06/07	369	74	78	-4	170	72	71	1
	07/08	428	83			122	75		
NVQs	05/06	2	0	51	-51	12	8	64	-56
	06/07	...	...	...	...	1	100	73	27
	07/08	...	...	...	...	16	56		
Other	05/06	264	75	75	0	160	69	66	3
	06/07	360	74	78	-4	169	72	70	2
	07/08	421	83			97	78		

... numbers are too small to warrant inclusion

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
All Long - Level 3	05/06	300	71	74	-3	105	72	60	12
	06/07	362	70	77	-7	142	60	65	-5
	07/08	439	77			64	75		
A/A2 Levels	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08	12	92	86	6	2	100	76	24
AS Levels	05/06	21	5	76	-71	...	...	...	...
	06/07	35	54	84	-30	3	67	...	...
	07/08	46	57	84	-27	2	0	...	...
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	41	68	...	...	2	100	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other	05/06	234	78	73	5	103	72	61	11
	06/07	327	72	76	-4	139	60	66	-6
	07/08	381	79			60	77		

... numbers are too small to warrant inclusion

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes managed by the college 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	11	91	52	91	43
		timely	9	78	34	78	27
	06/07	overall	15	47	63	47	56
		timely	21	19	43	19	38
	07/08	overall	22	73	68	64	63
		timely	22	36	48	36	44
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	108	52	57	47	51
		timely	107	21	37	17	33
	06/07	overall	99	63	64	47	60
		timely	86	36	47	30	45
	07/08	Overall	75	75	67	69	64
		timely	75	43	53	37	50

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College/provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record (ILR)

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