

Barnet College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130425

Name of lead inspector: Elizabeth Warriner HMI

Last day of inspection: 4 December 2009

Type of provider: General Further Education College

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Information about the provider

1. Barnet College is a very large provider of General Further Education based on five main sites in North London. The college holds a number of contracts from the London North Learning and Skills Council(LSC). It provides courses from entry level to level 4 and in all of the 15 sector subject areas. Off-site provision is provided at employers' premises and community provision in schools and children's centres. Most young people study at level 3, although GCE A levels make up only 4% of enrolments. More than half of the learners are adults studying at level 1 and 2. The college also holds the contract for adult and community learning in the London Borough of Barnet. Its largest subcontractor, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute, was inspected in 2008 and graded satisfactory overall, with good outcomes and good quality provision.
2. Barnet is the fourth largest London Borough and is the twentieth most ethnically diverse in England. Its population of 338,100 is the second largest in London. The east of the borough is extremely prosperous, while the west has some of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. Several of Barnet's schools are amongst the highest achievers in England, and the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training is low. However, less than half of the college's students live in the Borough. Many travel from the neighbouring areas of Hackney and Brent, and some from as far as Brixton. The college has a much larger proportion of minority ethnic students, at 66%, than in the population of Barnet.
3. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:
 - CJL Training (Train to Gain, Spectator Safety)
 - Hillside (GCE A levels)
 - Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute (adult and community Learning)
 - LAFFAH (English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL))
 - NLITEC (ESOL)
 - Promise (ESOL)
 - RME consultancy (Train to Gain, Driving Goods Vehicles (DGV) through its two subcontractors, PHW and RTS)
 - Skills Training Centre (Developmental learning short courses)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to16 Further education (16 to18)	250 part-time learners 2,615 full-time learners 200 part-time learners (full-time equivalent: 2,748 learners excluding 14-16)
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	1,250 full-time learners 4,759 part-time learners (full-time equivalent: 3,475) 1,810 part-time adult and community learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	4,377 learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

Subject areas	Grade
Early years and playwork	2
Transportation Operations and Maintenance: Driving Goods Vehicles	1
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Visual arts	2
English for Speakers of Other Languages(ESOL)	2
Independent Living and Leisure Skills	1
Business administration and law	2

Overall effectiveness

- The college has maintained good overall effectiveness since its previous inspection and has good capacity to make further improvements. No aspect or subject area was graded less than good. Inspectors judged provision in independent living and leisure skills and in Driving Goods Vehicles to be outstanding. Other Train to Gain success rates are very high. Students make particularly good progress and develop useful skills. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned, though they sometimes do not stretch more able learners. Support for learners is exceptionally good. Partnerships are

outstanding and provision is highly responsive to local needs. Leadership and governance are strong. Safeguarding and equality of opportunity are well promoted.

5. Attendance and punctuality are patchy. Staff do not use technology enough to enhance learning, and some course reviews are insufficiently evaluative. Complaints are thoroughly handled on site but sometimes not robust enough in off-site provision. Information on financial support for adults is not signposted early enough.

Main findings

- Specialist provision for learners with disabilities is outstanding, as is the Train to Gain programme in Driving Goods Vehicles. Train to Gain programmes have very high success rates.
- Learners make very good progress. They develop good personal and social skills that enhance their employability. Many achieve well above their expected level, and some do this exceptionally quickly. However, punctuality and attendance are poor in some lessons. The college has introduced a system to address this but it is too soon to measure its impact.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and provide varied activities which help learners gain good knowledge and skills, and enjoy their work. Relationships between staff and students are good. However, not all teachers provide sufficient activities to challenge the more able learners and enable them to make better progress.
- The college has a robust and accurate scheme for reviewing and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Following observations, actions for improvement are addressed well through effective support and further training. However, the impact of improvements is not always reviewed early enough.
- Too few teachers make effective use of technology in lessons to support learning. This is exacerbated by the insufficiency of information and learning technology (ILT) resources in some teaching rooms. However, examples of good practice were seen by inspectors in a few subject areas, such as arts, business studies and specialist provision for disabled people.
- The range of courses is very broad and meets learners' needs and expectations extremely well. Learners take good advantage of clear progression routes and their progression into employment or further study is high.
- The college meets the needs of employers very successfully. Employers value the flexibility of training and assessment to fit their working patterns and the care taken to identify and meet their training needs.
- Partnerships are exceptionally strong and extensive. They deliver good outcomes for learners and the community in line with the college's successful strategic vision for educational and social inclusion in the Borough of Barnet and the surrounding area.

- Learners appreciate the exceptional support of their tutors. Support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly strong. Adult learners find the college especially welcoming but would like to be informed earlier of the range of financial support available to them to enable them to return to study.
- The principal, governors and senior managers provide very effective leadership through clear strategic and operational planning. The challenges of the accommodation plans have been particularly well managed. Highly committed governors provide good levels of scrutiny, challenge and support for senior managers.
- Safeguarding arrangements for learners are good. Equality and diversity are promoted well. The performance of different groups of learners is closely monitored. Arrangements for complaints are thorough and generally adhered to but are insufficiently robust in some off-site provision.
- Self-assessment and quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. Arrangements to monitor the quality of subcontracted provision are very thorough. However, course reviews are not always sufficiently evaluative. Management information about learners' performance is not consistently used to drive improvement. Some ESOL data does not fully comply with LSC guidelines.

What does Barnet College need to do to improve further?

- Further implement systems to promote punctuality and improve attendance.
- Ensure that ILT is used effectively in lessons to support learning and engage learners to enable them to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- Improve the consistency of lesson planning to ensure that activities meet individual needs and enable more able learners to make better progress and improve their level of achievement.
- Improve the rigour of course reviews so that they are sufficiently evaluative and ensure that management information relating to the performance of learners is consistently used to drive improvements, and complies with LSC requirements.
- Ensure that off-site provision adheres strictly to the college's complaints procedures so that any issues are dealt with according to the college's guidelines.
- Signpost, more clearly in the application process, the range of financial support available to adult learners to enable them to return to study.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the opportunity to gain confidence and qualifications to progress to work or higher education
- feeling safe around the college
- the varied activities in lessons
- the college's welcoming environment for mature students and those with disabilities
- the good support they receive from their teachers and assessors
- the good relationships they have with staff
- being treated like an adult
- the extent to which the college's extranet helps them with extra practice.

What learners would like to see improved:

- timely information on financial support in some subject areas
- accommodation that is too cramped and overcrowded to learn properly in some subject areas
- access to IT equipment and specialist software in their lessons
- opportunities for work experience.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the college's flexible approach to training that fits the work patterns of the business and its staff
- the responsiveness of the college to their needs
- good communication with the college and high levels of support by trainers
- in-depth analysis of their training needs and the care the college takes to fit training closely to their requirements
- the specialist knowledge shown by college staff in the vocational areas
- the beneficial impact of the training on the efficiency and effectiveness of the business.

What employers would like to see improved:

In a few instances:

- the extent to which off-the-job training reflects learners' work on the job
- their involvement in reviewing learners' progress
- the standard of learners' work and the speed of their progress towards achieving their qualifications.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

6. The college has made good progress in rectifying the key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Target-setting for learners has improved to a degree that it is no longer identified as a key recommendation. The range of enrichment activities and learner participation has improved across the provision and key skills are now satisfactorily embedded within teaching programmes.
7. The college and governors set demanding targets to improve the provision and experience of all learners through well-planned strategic and operational targets that are well considered. Governors challenge senior managers appropriately. Their clear strategic vision is successfully shared with all staff. The college has managed its accommodation strategy particularly well in difficult circumstances. Partnership working is outstanding.
8. Overall, quality improvement is satisfactory. Self-assessment is inclusive of the views of staff, governors, learners and other interested parties and it is largely accurate in its judgements. However, not all of the college's quality improvement arrangements for all course reviews are of a similar standard. Managers do not use management information in a sufficiently focused and timely manner to drive forward improvements to ensure that the college meets its ambitions for its learners to an even greater level.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

9. Outcomes for learners of all ages are good. Overall success rates rose steadily and have remained above the national average since the previous inspection, although unconfirmed college data indicate a decline in 2008/09. Learners on vocational programmes achieve well, particularly on Train to Gain programmes where timely success rates are very high. Overall, student achievement data for level 1 courses ending in 2007/08 could not be relied on to provide an accurate picture of the college's success rates, particularly for adult learners. Success rates in the large English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision are very variable and are included in the level 1 data, giving a misleading picture. Many learners on basic skills courses took accredited tests instead of course certificates last year. This was an improvement, giving them recognised qualifications to help them gain employment, although the pass rates appeared to decline.
10. The college has removed its poorly performing GCSE courses and has replaced them with more appropriate vocational options. It has made good arrangements with other local provision to ensure that students wishing to take GCSEs can still have this choice.
11. Success rates are high on many vocational courses at level 3, particularly in the arts. In the small GCE A-level provision, success rates are low, particularly on

one-year courses, although many learners make good progress. Retention on two-year courses between 2007 and 2009 has been adversely affected by the move to temporary accommodation during the construction of the new building in Wood Street. Punctuality and attendance on many courses are poor.

12. Key skills success rates have increased steadily and are satisfactory. In 2007/08, the number taking key skills was small. A new policy ensures that all young learners now take key skills courses which are integrated into their learning.
13. Learners make very good progress. They develop good personal and social skills that enhance their employability. Many achieve well above their expected level, and some do this exceptionally quickly. For instance, some young ESOL learners arriving with little English have achieved professional accountancy qualifications within three years. Learners enjoy college and are proud to celebrate their achievements. Progression into higher education and employment is good. Experienced workers learning on Train to Gain courses gain up-to-date knowledge that enhances their performance at work. Adults on community programmes achieve well and many progress into mainstream college courses.
14. Learners feel very safe. Learners with disabilities are particularly positive about the welcome and support they receive from other students. Many tutorial activities encourage learners to develop their awareness of their own safety.
15. Opportunities for learners to make a positive contribution to their community are excellent. Many take on additional responsibilities such as representing their course peers, mentoring others, and 'REPXtras', a new scheme to develop student ambassadors. An effective scheme gives peer educators training from local health professionals so that they can promote healthy lifestyles to their fellow students. Learners contribute well to their local communities. Arts students have produced many high profile commissions. Childcare courses develop aspiration in parents, and support local schools. Charity events raise money for good causes. An innovative community course helped local people to understand the democratic system so that they could participate in council elections.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

16. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well planned and well paced. They include a good range of learning activities to maintain students' interest and motivation. Exercises and activities are imaginative and used well to extend or reinforce students' learning. Many teachers make good use of the learners' initial and diagnostic test outcomes to help plan their teaching. For example, some very good practice was observed in business and in independent living and leisure skills. However, in a few lessons, teachers give insufficient attention to planning and carrying out activities to meet learners' individual needs, and more able learners are insufficiently challenged. Questioning techniques to check learning are generally effective, although a few teachers miss

opportunities to challenge learners to evaluate their own, and others', answers and develop their understanding. Some subject areas support learning with good work experience opportunities. For example, some exceptional external projects in the arts are helping to improve learners' vocational and literacy skills.

17. The college recognises that the effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons is inconsistent and that there are insufficient IT resources in some areas. However, some very effective use of ILT to assist learning was observed in visual arts and specialist provision for learners with disabilities. Although the introduction of new software for the virtual learning environment (VLE) is at a relatively early stage, it is becoming quickly populated with useful additional learning materials. Learners comment on how it is already helping them to develop their learning and understanding, for example on ESOL programmes.
18. Assessment and the review of learners' progress are good. Assignments and homeworks are set regularly and often relate to the world of work. Marked work is returned promptly but sometimes written feedback provides insufficient comment on how to improve. In Train to Gain programmes, assessment practices are good, employers are fully involved and tracking of learners' progress is very effective, particularly in the programme for driving goods vehicles.
19. The extent to which the provision meets the needs of learners and employers is outstanding. The curriculum is very broad covering all subject sector areas, including clear progression routes from entry level to level 4 in many areas. Learners' progression into higher level study or employment is good. Employers value very highly the care the college takes to identify and meet their training needs. They highlight the college's flexible approach to training and assessment to fit their working patterns. The LSC has supported the college's bid to re-introduce apprenticeships in response to customer demand.
20. The college has extremely strong and extensive partnerships in line with a well-considered strategic vision for educational and social inclusion in the Borough of Barnet and north London overall. Partnerships work innovatively to deliver clear outcomes for learners and the community, such as widening participation for a range of client groups, improving basic skills levels and retraining the unemployed. Successful working with Job Centre Plus on 'Response to Redundancy' programmes has led to development of courses for learners aged 18 to 24 via 'Sector Route Ways'.
21. The college works very well with local schools to deliver an increasing range of provision for learners aged 14 to 16. School leaders value the flexibility of these arrangements, which in some instances involve college staff delivering courses in the schools. Learners' outcomes are good, including good levels of progression into further study.

22. The programme of additional activities to enhance learners' development and progress has improved since the last inspection. In some subject areas, these include opportunities to take short courses that lead to additional qualifications and broaden learners' skills in related areas of work. Cross-college activities, such as Bollywood dancing, enhance cultural awareness or work as part of the well-designed tutorial programme.
23. Care, guidance and support are good. Learners find the college a welcoming and friendly environment, and courses meet their expectations very well. Adult learners feel particularly welcome but have identified that they would like to be informed earlier of the range of financial support available to them to enable them to return to study. Learners appreciate the exceptional support of their tutors. They know how well they are progressing in their studies and what they have to do to improve the quality of their work. The college acknowledges that there remains scope to further improve the consistent quality of target-setting in individual learning plans and the level of learners' participation in this process. An online system in visual arts is proving a successful model that will be extended across the college.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

24. The principal, governors and senior managers provide very effective leadership. Strategic planning is good with targets set to meet the demands and needs of its local community very well. The implementation of the college's accommodation strategy has been challenging and has been particularly well managed to ensure that learners are not overly affected. Subcontracted provision for local Adult and Community Learning and Train to Gain programmes is well organised. Community provision for ESOL is managed very effectively through franchised arrangements with three local providers.
25. Governance is good. Governors are well informed and highly committed to the college's success and are fully involved in setting and monitoring strategic targets. Governors provide a good level of scrutiny and challenge to senior managers.
26. Arrangements for safeguarding learners are good. Policies and procedures for child protection and vulnerable adults are current and appropriate. A single and comprehensive central record clearly details Criminal Records Bureau checks carried out for all relevant staff, volunteers, governors and employees of franchise partners. A team of eight designated safeguarding officers has been created and links with the local safeguarding board are well established. Where issues arise, staff adhere strictly to procedures and guidelines. Governors and staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. Online training for safeguarding is now also available.
27. The college uses a good variety of activities to engage learners in safeguarding issues. The online integrated tutorial framework, the Frame, includes a range of modules and materials for tutors and peer educators to use with learners, including drink driving, knife awareness and sexual abuse awareness. Posters

are well displayed around the college sites and wallet cards have recently been produced and given to all staff and learners. Risk assessments are thorough and in place for learning and outreach activities including work placements. The college has developed very effective links with Barnet refugee council and social services for unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers. Opportunities for individuals with mental health difficulties are provided during lunchtime drop-in sessions at a local mental health clinic.

28. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. A single equality scheme and associated action plan meets the college's duties with regard to race, gender and disability legislation. Policies are regularly reviewed and updated. The college recruits many learners from diverse backgrounds and is working to address the under-representation of the local community and of its student body within its staff and governor profile.
29. An equalities committee, with subgroups for race, disability and gender, closely monitors the performance of different groups of learners and sets targets for improvement. For example, to improve success rates of older white females in art, and, in humanities and science, those of young males from minority ethnic backgrounds. The college leads the North London learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) learning and employment partnership, working productively with a range of partners. Specialist LLDD and mental health provision in the college is outstanding. Learners who need assistive technology have ready access to it. Learners are represented in the disability equality group. Disabled people were closely involved in a recent disability audit of the college site and developing the actions leading from it. Complaints are generally dealt with very well and staff closely adhere to college guidelines. However, arrangements for off-site provision are not always as systematic.
30. Engagement with learners is good. The views of learners are taken seriously and are collected in various ways through focus groups, feedback in tutorials and lessons. Two student governors represent learners at each corporation meeting. A good range of on-line activity is used very effectively to elicit feedback and views from learners. Employers are represented on the governing body and the college engages with work-based learners and their employers satisfactorily.
31. Self-assessment and quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. The college's assessment of its strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning is accurate. The scheme for monitoring the quality of lessons is managed well. The team of observers are well trained and the consistency of their judgements is validated internally by peer observations. The college has a clear procedure for supporting and developing all teachers to improve, with a particular focus on those whose teaching is not yet good or better. Very effective support in developing teachers' skills is provided by line managers, subject learning coaches and the professional development advisors. Judgements in the self-assessment report are largely accurate. An annual quality audit plan is in place. Arrangements to monitor the quality of sub-contracted provision are exceptionally thorough and involve both planned and

unannounced visits and observations of teaching, learning and assessment.

32. However, course reviews are not always sufficiently evaluative. Management information relating to performance of learners is not consistently used to drive improvements. The college's approach to reporting student achievement data for 2007/08 to the LSC was, in some instances, not fully compatible with LSC guidance.
33. The college faces huge challenges with respect to accommodation planning but the use of resources is carefully planned and is generally satisfactory. Financial management and controls are good. The college provides good value for money.

Subject areas

Early years and playwork

Grade 2

Context

34. One hundred and twenty four learners are enrolled on employer responsive provision in childcare. On Train to Gain childcare programmes, 60 are working towards level 2, and 52 towards level 3. The remaining learners are funded through the European Social Fund. Learners are employed or are volunteer workers in schools and children's centres.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high. In 2008/09, some level 2 learners made apparent slow progress because the college had not allowed for school holidays in setting their end dates. However, all learners except one achieved their qualifications. Overall success rates are well above the national rate.
- Learners make good progress in acquiring and developing a good range of workplace and social skills. Their personal skills develop strongly and their self-confidence increases. Employers particularly value the training for its close links to work activities.
- Learners feel safe and value college measures to maintain a safe and secure environment. They know who to contact if they feel unsafe at work or have any concerns about college life. They collaborate well and exhibit respect for others' views during group work.
- Learners enjoy their training and participate confidently and enthusiastically. Their work is good and standards are high. Learners enjoy the full range of classroom activities and relish the challenge of completing tasks and working on group projects.
- Teachers are skilled in developing training to meet learners' needs. Lessons are carefully planned to include relevant, interesting and inclusive activities. Tutors know their learners well and adapt their teaching effectively to build their skill and understanding.
- Learners receive good, productive feedback on their work and helpful guidance on how to improve their practice. Employers are kept up to date with learners' progress and are proactive in encouraging the learners to practice new skills in the workplace.
- Trainers and assessors provide very good support for learners. Learners appreciate their quick response to queries and the time staff spent with them to reassure and support them, particularly in the early stages of the programme. Assessors are flexible, supportive, approachable and accessible. They have a very good understanding of learners' personal barriers to learning, and respond with highly individualised support.

- The college has developed very effective, diverse and innovative partnerships with employer and community groups. The provision is highly tailored to employers' and learners' needs. Staff are quick to respond to employers' requests for bespoke training. Employers are familiar with the course content and provide good opportunities for learners to practise their skills wherever possible.
- Innovative projects based in schools are successful and well attended, promoting significant improvements in parents' aspirations. Employers and learners value this highly.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers communicate well with employers. Assessors feel well supported with good access to staff development, and communication with managers is good.
- Equality of opportunity and safeguarding are well promoted during learners' programmes. However, they are not included in learners' induction. Although many staff meetings discuss these topics, they are not a standing agenda item in team meetings or standardisation sessions. Complaints are promptly dealt with but are not always formally recorded.

What does Barnet College need to do to improve further?

- Extend the Train to Gain induction programme to include introductory sessions on equality and diversity and safeguarding.
- Ensure that safeguarding and equality and diversity are formally planned agenda items at standardisation meetings.
- Formally record and monitor complaints and issues raised by employers and learners.

Transportation operations and maintenance: Driving Goods Vehicles

Grade 1

Context

35. Since January 2009, Barnet College has provided Driving Goods Vehicle (DGV) qualifications at level 2 and 3 through Train to Gain. Two subcontractors deliver the programme for 212 learners based at Uttoxeter and 75 learners at Burton-on-Trent. Most learners are male, over 25 and White British. The programme is entirely work-based, serving 28 employers ranging from large national organisations to small local companies.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Learners make exceptional progress and achieve the qualification well before their target completion date. For the period 2008/09, there were 24 level 2 learners, of these 96% achieved their goals. Ninety nine per cent of level 3 learners were successful. They make rapid progress. Some complete within two months.
- Expansion and improvement of knowledge and skills in driving techniques are exceptional. Learners develop very good personal and professional confidence and self-esteem. They are proud to achieve a recognised qualification which increases their employability.
- Learners gain highly valued additional qualifications that enhance their employability further, such as the Certificate in Professional Competence and Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED). Success rates are high. Employers value the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and additional qualifications highly and praise their impact on learners' driving efficiency. Some celebrate learners' success with a formal presentation of their NVQ certificate.
- Initial assessment, induction and assessment planning are very effective. Learners' literacy skills are assessed and assessors provide support to complete portfolios if required. Programme lengths are flexibly adjusted to suit learners' skills and circumstances.
- Assessment is highly flexible to meet the needs of employers and learners. Assessors are very experienced, well trained and passionate about raising standards in the transport industry. Assessment is available throughout the UK, including the Channel Islands, at any time of day or night, to support the employers' needs and include learners who work shifts.
- Internal verification is good. Verifiers are rigorous in sampling portfolios and observing assessment throughout the programme, giving particular attention to less experienced assessors. Standardisation meetings are very effective in improving quality and consistency. Meetings are well attended and held regularly. However there is no standard agenda. Discussions do not always include health and safety or equality and diversity.
- Electronic technology is used innovatively and effectively. It supports assessment and internal verification particularly well. Assessors, employers,

awarding bodies and learners can all review progress in detail at unit, element and performance objective level through effective remote access arrangements. A wide range of evidence includes audio, video and photography, and a message board is used effectively to share good practice and expertise.

- Support for learners is good. Staff are very flexible, supportive and accessible. Assessors have a very good understanding of the learners' personal apprehensions and barriers to learning. Learners feel safe and well supported. Assessment on the road is particularly well managed to ensure a very safe setting. Health and safety are exceptionally well promoted and maintained in the workplace.
- Leadership and management of the programme are good. Partnerships are outstanding with high levels of employer satisfaction. Managers are very proactive and responsive to subcontractors', employers' and learners' needs. Communication with managers is good and assessors feel well supported.
- Subcontractor monitoring is highly effective. Managers maintain regular contact with subcontractors with fortnightly management meetings to discuss learner progress, achievements and quality issues. Rigorous scheduled and unannounced audits ensure quality standards are met. Action plans show clear quality improvement targets that are promptly actioned.
- Learners work in an atmosphere of professional respect free from harassment and discrimination. However, the equalities training they receive at induction is not sufficiently reinforced during their programme. Staff have a good basic understanding of equality and diversity but their development is not sufficiently structured to ensure that their knowledge is up to date.

What does Barnet College need to do to improve further?

- Make the promotion of equality and diversity as effective and well managed as other aspects of the DGV programme. Ensure that safeguarding is fully embedded into routine processes.
- Improve the structure of team meetings to include health and safety, equality of opportunity and safeguarding.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Grade 2

Context

36. The college offers NVQ levels 1 to 3 in hairdressing and beauty therapy, level 2 barbering and levels 2 and 3 media make-up pathways. Four hundred and eighty four learners are enrolled on a range of full-time and part-time programmes. There are 14 hairdressing apprentices. One hundred pupils aged 14 to 16 are enrolled on salon services or NVQ level 1 beauty therapy.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates in the past three years were high on hairdressing levels 1 and 2 and at all levels in beauty therapy. College data indicate that rates declined in 2008/09. Nevertheless, success rates on all courses, with the exception of beauty therapy level 1, remain above national averages.
- The development of learners' skills in beauty therapy and media make-up is good. Learners practise facials, manicure, waxing and media make-up treatments to a high standard. Employment skills are high in hairdressing, colouring, perming and styling. Highly qualified, experienced and enthusiastic staff use their industrial experience effectively to set high commercial standards.
- Learners' attendance during the inspection was low. Too many learners arrive late. Learners who miss lessons are encouraged to attend support sessions to catch up. Teachers challenge lateness and the college has introduced measures to encourage learners to improve their punctuality though it is too early to judge their impact.
- The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned. In the best lessons, teachers use effective strategies to engage and inspire learners. Individual learners' needs are well accounted for. Learners enjoy lessons and take pride in their work. Teachers provide constructive feedback which helps learners improve.
- Assessment practices are satisfactory. However, some aspects of assessment planning do not take sufficient account of learners' levels of skill. All teachers record and monitor the progress of every learner in their own class. However, some opportunities to accredit learners' skills are missed because there is no overall record of assessment to support planning. Tutors pay insufficient attention to learners' starting points when planning functional skills assessment.
- Academic and welfare support for learners are good and aid progress. Learners receive appropriate initial assessment and those who need additional support receive it. Teachers support learners well with valued guidance. Frequent tutorials provide helpful information and guidance on health matters. Learners also enjoy a lunchtime club and drop-in support sessions. The college provides good financial support to help with equipment purchase and travel costs.

- A wide variety of stimulating activities enriches learners' programmes, for example visits to New York and national exhibitions. Activities include henna, fake bake, tooth fairy, ear piercing and threading. This year, a learner won the Afro-Caribbean hairdressing student of the year award in a national competition.
- Accommodation is dated and cramped. Hairdressing salons are crowded, impeding learners', clients' and tutors' movement. Salon layouts fail to allow tutors the opportunity to view all learners at once. Some beauty students have to wait their turn for assessment because there are too few couches. Décor in the salons does not reflect a modern real working environment. However, a newly created reception area helps learners develop professional reception skills.
- Leadership and management are good. Quality improvement systems are well established. Action planning during appraisals and observations is used effectively to improve teaching and learning. Tutors are enthusiastic and feel well supported and valued. They contribute effectively to curriculum development.
- Procedures to test college equipment are very thorough. The college implements clear rules about the use of learners' own electrical appliances. However, the monitoring of electrical equipment testing for these appliances is insufficiently robust.
- The management of equality and diversity is good. Data are used well to monitor the performance of different groups. Programmes are well planned to meet the needs of the diverse population studying in the college.

What does Barnet College need to do to improve further?

- Review and strengthen systems to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Design a coordinated system to record all assessment so that tutors can plan effectively. Improve the scheduling of assessment to take better account of learners' starting points and progress.
- Improve accommodation to better reflect a modern real working environment and ensure there are sufficient couches for all beauty learners to be assessed at the same time.
- Ensure all electrical equipment used in the college is checked appropriately.

Visual arts

Grade 2

Context

37. The college offers a wide range of full-time visual arts programmes, including art and design, graphics, photography and fashion and clothing from level 1 to level 3. Short courses are also offered. Of 254 full-time learners, 21 are studying at level 1, 47 at level 2 and 186 at level 3.

Key findings

- Success rates are excellent on National Diplomas in fashion and on National Diploma photography. However, BTEC Introductory Diploma achievement and retention are well below the national average. First Diploma achievement and retention are also low.
- The standard of work is good across all visual art areas, with sketchbooks full of experimental work, photographs and large paintings and sculptures. Wall displays of students' work are inspiring. Students are committed and motivated and enjoy their classes. Attendance during inspection was satisfactory.
- In some classes, a few students arrive late. These times can vary from a few minutes to half an hour. Teachers usually settle them in quickly but this can be disruptive for the rest of the class.
- Progression to higher education is good. Students attend summer schools or autumn workshops at universities. A few progress to prestigious universities such as St Martins, Ravensbourne or the London College of Fashion.
- Students feel safe on college premises. There are regular meetings between teachers and student representatives resulting in actions for improvements for students. A peer educator role for students has recently been established to help to safeguard vulnerable students.
- Specialist health and safety procedures and practice are satisfactory, with clear warning labels and risk assessments completed.
- Learners make very good contributions to community activities, with several major sculptural projects completed as commissions. Art displays include exhibitions at major shopping centres, and very large sculptures include work in bronze and limestone for commissions.
- Teaching and learning are good. Students are well motivated, participating enthusiastically. The better teaching is energetic and well paced, engaging all students. Challenging work expands students' knowledge effectively through good use of open questioning to check understanding. Most sessions are well planned with a good variety of activities. Teachers talk too much in weaker sessions using didactic delivery and not checking understanding enough.
- Very good enrichment activities extend the skills of students who use research material from educational trips to develop their work. They can also take short six-week courses to gain extra qualifications in related areas such as computer aided design or metalwork.

- Support for students is good. Additional learning support needs are identified quickly and put into place. Teachers offer a caring and supportive environment for learning. The online tutorial system is comprehensive and easy for staff to access, with details of all support and tutorials. Students' academic progress is monitored closely through online individual learning plans.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff feel well supported and communication is good. Regular training enhances their professional development. A positive ethos prevails among staff and students despite the accommodation challenges of working in older buildings while the new college is built around them. Pleasing strategies to make the old buildings attractive include the use of large colour photographs and decorations on the hoardings.
- Self-assessment is effective in identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The promotion of equality and diversity is good, with an inclusive culture. However, observations of teaching and learning carried out by the college have higher grades than found on inspection.

What does Barnet College need to do to improve further?

- Identify and implement strategies to improve success rates on level 1 and level 2 courses.
- Implement college policies to make further improvements to punctuality and attendance.
- Develop strategies to share good practice and increase the variety of activities in some lessons.

English for Speakers of Other Languages

Grade 2

Context

38. Around 2300 learners attend English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses. Provision is offered on a full- and part-time basis, from pre-entry to level 2 at three main sites, 14 local venues, and in franchised provision. Customised courses for learners aged 16 to 18 comprise 7% of provision. Four curriculum managers leading on different aspects report to the head of school. The community development curriculum manager coordinates closely with the on-site ESOL team.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Skills development is good. Learners make good progress in developing their communication and learning skills. Pre-entry and entry level learners develop well their basic skills of reading and writing, organising work and examination techniques. Learners develop good team-working skills and gain confidence using computers as an effective learning tool. Most learners progress to further learning or work.
- Success rates are very variable. In 2008/09, success rates on entry level 1 and 2 and part-time entry level 3 courses were outstanding. However, success rates were low on full-time entry level 3 and level 2, and part time level 1 courses.
- Learners are highly motivated, feel safe, enjoy coming to college and appreciate the way courses are developed to meet their aims. Good opportunities to make positive contributions to the wider community include attending national conferences and participating in charity fund-raising. Learner representative elections involve them in democratic processes and develop their knowledge. They participate well in forums evaluating their learning experiences.
- Teaching and learning are good. Activities in most lessons are challenging and enjoyable. Learners understand what skills they will develop. Lessons have a brisk, stimulating pace. Tutors plan well to meet individual learners' needs. They make good use of authentic learning materials such as newspapers and relevant websites. Learners have good opportunities to practise the full range of language skills. Tutors give clear, constructive feedback.
- A few lessons are dull and uninspiring. Tutors over-rely on explaining learning points by means of PowerPoint presentations or lengthy verbal explanations. Learners are passive and often lose concentration. Tutors do not plan sufficient challenge to address individuals' needs. They pay limited attention to the room layout to facilitate effective small group work and interactive activities. Learners have few opportunities to practise their speaking skills.
- The provision is very responsive to the needs and interests of learners. Flexible day and evening, full- and part-time language provision for adult and young people is provided across the Borough. Learners are offered further options such as numeracy, citizenship, or information technology to enhance their

language learning and employability. Some train as community interpreters. Young adults have a well-organised work experience.

- Learners' experience is enriched by visits which they plan carefully with tutors to gain a greater understanding of the British culture. They also develop social skills, planning, map reading and teamworking. Learners are also challenged by informative talks from a range of agencies such as the local refugee council and a recycling charity. Many learners enjoy using the VLE for further study.
- The college has developed good partnerships within the local community to promote and support the social cohesion agenda. The college works closely with the extended schools services, faith groups, Nextstep and other educational providers to fund provision which encourages new learners to take first steps to participate in learning.
- Learners are well supported to enable them to succeed. Parents and carers' evenings for young learners are effectively supported by trained interpreters. All learners have well-planned tutorial programmes. Individual learning plans are used effectively to record progress and set specific actions for language improvement. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored. Information, advice and guidance on finance, housing, health and mental health are good.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The recent restructure and appointment of a single head of department provides a coherent strategic direction for the provision. However, it is too soon to judge the impact on learning. A clear strategy to extend external accreditation opportunities to all learners and develop appropriate vocational pathways and accreditation to all aspects of the provision has been well implemented.
- Quality assurance processes are implemented inconsistently. The teaching observation process is thorough but some observations focus too little on learning. Course reviews are detailed, but are anecdotal and insufficiently evaluative. Data are used insufficiently to fully provide an overview of areas for improvement across the provision. Action planning to address the wide variation in success rates is underdeveloped.
- Equality and diversity are well promoted. Learners worked closely with tutors to simplify the college handbook, making it more accessible for all. Learners gain a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities through the learning process. They have good opportunities to gain vocational qualifications, as their language skills improve, through bespoke courses in areas such as travel and tourism, hair and beauty, and accounting.

What does Barnet College need to do to improve further?

- Analyse data more effectively to identify key trends and priority areas for improvement across the whole provision. Improve action planning to address key issues identified
- Ensure all staff consistently plan stimulating and challenging learning activities to enable all learners to participate fully in active learning activities. Increase the use of authentic learning materials, such as local maps to introduce the language of directions, to engage learners fully and provide relevance to activities.

Independent Living and Leisure Skills

Grade 1

Context

39. The college has 396 learners, of whom 50 are under 19. Two main college centres and 11 outreach centres host 38 courses. About half the students follow programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) providing a sensory curriculum up to entry level. The remainder, who have mental health conditions, attend specialist courses from pre-entry through to level 2. Learners are supported by 22 full-time and fractional staff, 16 part-time staff, 35 support staff, and 22 volunteers.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Learners make excellent progress towards achieving their learning aims. Pass rates for accredited courses are high. Progression rates onto higher level courses, into other forms of education and into work, are good.
- Learners make outstanding progress in developing personal and social skills. Learners with mental health conditions gain confidence individually and in group work. Many are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning. Learners with learning difficulties can express opinions and preferences confidently in a variety of environments. They are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy classes. In a dance class, learners with a wide range of learning and physical difficulties displayed good skills, bringing subtle expressions into a demanding routine.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lesson planning is detailed and learning outcomes take careful account of individual learners' personal targets. Teachers use a good variety of active learning strategies to engage learners. The needs of learners with mental health conditions are carefully and sensitively met through the individualised teaching programme. Teachers are effective in directing and managing the input of additional adults in the class.
- Initial assessment is good. An appropriate range of assessments is used to accurately record learners' starting points. Information from assessment is used effectively to inform teaching and to set realistic but challenging targets.
- Learners feel safe and welcomed in all parts of the college campus, at the outreach centres and in work experience settings.
- Courses are highly effective in matching the personal aspirations and work-related goals of learners. Learning pathways are well-developed and signposted clearly for all learners.
- The college has developed strong and effective partnerships with local statutory and voluntary sector organisations. Learners benefit from integrated planning so that a wide range of courses and options are available. However, opportunities for some learners to gain externally recognised qualifications are insufficient.
- Support for learners is outstanding. Class sizes are rarely large and tutors direct the work of study support assistants and trained volunteers very effectively.

Group tutorials are very well planned to ensure that the safeguarding needs of learners are met. Tutors follow up learners' pastoral needs diligently, visiting their homes where appropriate.

- Leadership and management are outstanding. A clear commitment to inclusion is driven by senior management. A strong sense of strategic direction informs the development of new services.
- The college is outstanding in promoting the safeguarding of learners. Staff receive appropriate training and safeguarding issues are regularly rehearsed with learners through the curriculum. Individual targets for learners with learning difficulties are set and reviewed within the framework of the five Every Child Matters themes. Risk assessments on all sites and external workplaces are carried out thoroughly.
- Equality and diversity are good. Equal opportunity matters are handled as they arise in the curriculum but not actively planned into curriculum delivery. Data are used effectively to understand the relative performance of different groups of learners and the information used to close any performance gap.
- The self-assessment process is thorough and accurate. The self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths and areas for improvement as those uncovered in the inspection. Quality assurance procedures are very good. The observation of teaching and learning scheme is robust and contains sufficient detail to identify areas for development and further training. However, examples of good practice are not routinely identified and used as exemplars.

What does Barnet College need to do to improve further?

- Review the range and extent of externally accredited provision so that learners have more access to nationally recognised qualifications.
- Ensure that examples of good practice are identified during the observation of teaching and learning and shared across the staff team.

Business administration and Law

Grade 2

Context

40. Some 587 learners follow full-time courses in business and accounting at levels 1, 2 or 3. A further 37 learners are taking GCE AS or A levels in business, law or accounting. Two hundred of the full-time learners are over 19 years of age and the rest are below. A further 280 learners study part-time, mostly on accounting courses.

Key findings

- Achievement is good. Success rates are high in NVQ administration level 1 and in NVQ accounting at level 2. Many learners achieve outstanding outcomes relative to previous attainment. This is particularly evident on the BTEC National Certificate for ESOL learners whose success rates are 17 percentage points above the expected value. The college has identified strategies to improve the minority of courses whose success rates are not higher than national averages.
- Learners make very good progress. Fifty per cent of learners from the BTEC First Diploma progress to the BTEC National Diploma. Ninety per cent of learners on this course gain university places. The quality of learners' work is good, with particularly good technical skills in accounting. Learners also improve their employability through significantly increased self-confidence, good presentation skills and the ability to speak out effectively in group discussions.
- Too many learners arrive late for lessons. The college has introduced a swipe card system to monitor attendance, but it is too early to measure its impact.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Learners are inspired by enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff. Teachers use a wide range of well-planned teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of all learners. They use examples from their own industry experience very effectively to illustrate how theories are applied in practice. Learners benefit from very good individual coaching.
- Progression routes are well planned. The college offers a wide range of courses with well-designed progression between programmes. A fast track accounting course enables learners with previous experience in accounting to progress rapidly through the AAT qualification. Courses provided at several locations in the daytime and evening meet the needs of those with childcare responsibilities very well.
- Very good partnerships and initiatives are used productively to meet learners' needs. Learners enhance their experience with a good range of enrichment, including visits and events at prestigious organisations. Very strong links with a local university enable learners to take access courses leading to foundation degrees.
- Learners are very well supported. Highly approachable staff are keen to help. Individual and group tutorials are well planned, enjoyable and well attended. Advice and guidance are very good and many learners raise their aspirations to pursue challenging progression routes. Initiatives such as the risk register are

effectively implemented to ensure learners' support needs are met and monitored.

- Most individual learning plans set clear targets for improvement. These are monitored effectively at tutorials and learners know what to do to progress. However, some targets in plans and reviews are poorly written and imprecise.
- Curriculum leadership is very strong. Staff have clear direction and roles and responsibilities are well understood. All staff feel very well supported and communication is open and effective. All staff benefit from good development opportunities and many update their skills in industry. They have devised many good initiatives to develop new courses and to provide mechanisms to promote further quality improvement.
- Initiatives to promote equality and diversity are good. The department's culture of respect and mutual awareness is very evident. The curriculum strongly supports inclusion. Many new arrivals to the country make very fast progress through thoughtfully designed courses with good language support. Arrangements to safeguard learners are good.

What does Barnet College need to do to improve further?

- Recent initiatives should be developed further to improve the punctuality on all full-time business courses.
- Maintain existing initiatives to further improve the success rates for courses where success is only around benchmark.
- Further training and guidance should be given to some staff to improve the consistency in target-setting for all learners.

Information about the inspection

41. Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and seven additional inspectors, assisted by the college's director of quality, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
42. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Barnet college

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	8992	250	3115	1250	
Full-time learners	7250		234	6579	4377
Part-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	1
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	1
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	1				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	1
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	1	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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