

Bolton College

General further education college

Inspection dates

7–10 February 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good	Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders, governors and managers have worked hard since the last inspection to improve successfully the outcomes for learners and the quality of the provision.
- Leaders, governors and managers plan a broad and varied curriculum that is very responsive to meeting local priorities and employers' needs.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is exemplary, reflecting an inclusive culture where differences are celebrated.
- Teachers engage enthusiastically in the extensive staff development programmes, resulting in improvements to the quality of teaching and learning.
- After a period of decline, a high proportion of learners aged 16 to 19 on study programmes now make good progress and achieve their qualifications.
- Learners develop a good range of vocational and practical skills and a high proportion progress to apprenticeships, work or higher-level study.
- Learners develop good employability and personal skills; standards of behaviour are good and learners demonstrate tolerance and respect towards their teachers and peers.
- College staff provide effective pastoral and learning support. They ensure that learners who require additional support make good progress. Learners with high needs quickly develop their skills and confidence to become independent.
- Well-targeted information, advice and careers guidance enable learners to make informed choices about the next stages in their learning and career.
- Governors make a valuable contribution to the running of the college, providing good support and challenge to the leadership team.
- Not enough adult learners are challenged to make good progress and achieve their potential.
- Attendance at English and mathematics classes is too low. Too few learners improve their GCSE grades in English and mathematics.
- A minority of study programme teaching, particularly at level 3, does not sufficiently challenge learners to achieve their potential.
- Teachers do not consistently set targets that help learners understand what they need to do to improve their work and how to make more rapid progress.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Bolton College is a medium-sized college located in the town centre. Bolton is a large, diverse borough with a population of 281,600. Of this population, 21% consider themselves part of one of the non-White ethnic minorities, with those from an Indian background constituting the largest minority group. Bolton includes affluent areas and some of the poorest in the region. Around 43% of the borough's population live in areas that are among the 25% most deprived in England and Wales.
- The proportion of people unemployed in Bolton is 11.4%, which is higher than the rate for the North West (10.6%). The proportion of learners aged 16 in the borough who achieve grades A* to C in five or more GCSEs including English and mathematics is 58.5%, which is slightly below the national average.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers' planning for learning consistently and fully meets the needs of individual learners, and make sure that it provides learning of an appropriate pace and level of challenge for learners of all abilities, particularly at level 3 and on courses for adults.
- Review and reinforce ways of improving attendance on GCSE and functional skills English and mathematics courses, so that learners improve their skills and gain qualifications in these essential subjects.
- Ensure that teachers set clear and precise targets for learners, so that learners are clear about how they can improve their work, make more rapid progress and achieve their potential.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, senior managers and governors have an ambitious vision for the college that includes clear priorities to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the outcomes of learners and apprentices. They are committed to providing high-quality vocational learning that responds to local and regional needs.
- Leaders and senior managers have improved successfully the majority of areas requiring improvement identified at the last inspection. Governors and senior leaders now ensure that managers are accountable for the quality of their work and they rigorously monitor the effect of actions for improvement. Senior leaders use a comprehensive range of data to identify underperformance at course, curriculum and college level, which they use effectively to plan and evaluate improvement. The quality improvement plan sets specific targets, which senior leaders and governors monitor effectively to ensure that, in most cases, low performance is swiftly improved.
- Leaders and managers use effective quality improvement strategies, including self-assessment, to identify accurately the areas requiring improvement. Consequently, managers have reduced the differences in performance in the majority of areas previously identified as weak, resulting in a higher proportion of learners and apprentices achieving their qualifications.
- Senior leaders and managers work effectively with a wide range of partners, including employers, to develop the curriculum very effectively to meet local and regional needs. Senior leaders forge positive relationships with schools to help Year 11 pupils progress to appropriate courses. Clear progression pathways help adults to re-enter employment, support learners with high needs to become more independent, and ensure that apprentices and 16–18-year-old learners continue their education or secure long-term employment. Effective partnerships with universities provide support for learners to progress from full-time study in the college, to university. For example, managers have developed a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) centre that is providing an effective stepping-stone to university for learners.
- College staff, who observe the college's work as part of the quality improvement process, provide reliable and accurate judgements on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers provide comprehensive and effective staff development, which improves teachers' practice. Teachers value the wide range of staff development and individual coaching that they receive to improve specific aspects of their teaching. Teachers are encouraged to share effective practice at a number of events throughout the year. Managers use performance management processes effectively to ensure that the weakest teachers improve their practice, following intensive support.
- Senior leaders and governors promote a highly inclusive ethos where learners are tolerant of each other and behave responsibly. Learners and staff uphold a culture that aligns well with British values, such as tolerance and respect for others. Learners of different cultures and backgrounds work harmoniously together.

- Managers and staff promote equality and diversity passionately and exceptionally well. Managers identify any particular groups of learners who do not achieve as well as others and put effective actions in place. Consequently, there are no significant differences in achievement between different groups of learners.
- While the majority of areas for improvement at the previous inspection have been rectified, a small number remain. For example, while quality assurance processes have been reviewed since the previous inspection and are now rigorous, managers do not ensure that enough learners at level 3 make rapid progress in relation to their starting points. Consequently, too many are not challenged sufficiently to achieve to their potential.
- While managers have taken actions to improve the quality of the teaching of English and mathematics, it is still not yet consistently good across the college, resulting in too few learners making good progress and achieving these qualifications in some subject areas, for example, in visual arts.

The governance of the provider

- Governors have a good range of business and financial skills, experience and expertise to support senior leaders effectively. Governors analyse the extensive data and performance information they receive from leaders. This enables them to provide effective challenge to leaders, which has resulted in significant improvements being made.
- Governors provide support to leaders through effective 'task and finish' groups, which has ensured that the majority of areas for improvement at the last inspection have been addressed successfully.
- Governors ensure that leaders have the necessary focus and resources to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Learners at the college feel safe. They have a good understanding of potential risks and know how to keep themselves safe. The number of learners disclosing personal safeguarding concerns has increased and staff resolve them well through very effective partnerships with external agencies.
- Managers ensure that their learners are protected from a range of safeguarding concerns including forced marriage, female genital mutilation and sexual exploitation, through effective monitoring and by taking swift action when needed. Very good support is provided to the most vulnerable learners. For example, learners with special educational needs or disabilities and mental health concerns receive additional support to assist them at college and in their personal lives.

- Managers ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all staff, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks and comprehensive scrutiny of job applicants' suitability. Staff and governors have received training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Managers' understanding of the local risks posed by radicalisation is good. Learners show an awareness of how to work safely in workshops and at work, as well as online. Managers monitor this through a range of effective processes and software systems.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are effective in helping learners to achieve and make good progress. The most effective teaching is well planned and makes effective use of learners' starting points. Teachers make particularly good use of a range of questioning techniques and deliver well-paced learning, which engages learners' interest effectively. Learners with high needs receive highly effective teaching that is challenging and interesting, and promotes independence, which helps them to achieve realistic and relevant targets, based on a thorough understanding of their individual barriers to learning.
- Learners develop very good high-level practical and theoretical skills which employers value. These skills aid learners to secure employment on completion of their qualifications. Teachers use their vocational and industrial experience well to support the development of these skills.
- Highly effective learning support enables learners with special educational needs or disabilities make good progress. For example, learning support tutors in English and mathematics have good subject knowledge, which is used effectively to link English and mathematics to the subject area. They use information about learners' starting points to personalise learning and enable learners to make good progress. Learners are confident to ask for help and actively participate in lessons. The college's range of specialist resources, for learners who require them, is extensive and effective.
- Teachers make very effective use of the college's electronic recording of learners' targets and progress. Subsequently, teachers and managers can identify how much progress learners have made, and what they still need to do to achieve their learning goals. However, too few learners on level 3 programmes are encouraged to reach or exceed their minimum target grade. As a result, these learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- On a minority of courses, teachers do not set precise short- and long-term targets with their learners. Many targets are simply tasks to complete and consequently, learners are not sufficiently clear about what they need to do to improve. However, apprentices are required to set and monitor their own targets, against which progress is measured. As a result, apprentices develop good skills in planning, time management and prioritisation and they make good progress. Employers set challenging work-related targets to meet business objectives and apprentices' needs, providing good opportunities for them to progress well and develop occupational skills.

- Assessment of learners' work is good and helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to make improvements. The quality of feedback on learners' work is generally effective, although a significant minority of learners are not encouraged to correct spelling errors in their written work. Assessment practice in the workplace is well planned. Assessors ask probing questions to determine apprentices' wider understanding of topics and develop their analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Teachers make good use of a range of learning resources and materials that celebrate diversity and that reflect their multi-racial society. Learners are respectful of each other and work well together in class. The teaching of fundamental British values and equalities is integrated successfully into programmes. Tutorials are highly effective in promoting diversity and developing learners' understanding of tolerance, respect and resilience.
- Most learners make good progress in improving their English and mathematics from their low starting points. Robust tracking of each learner from their starting point ensures early intervention for those in need of further support. Those learners who can make further progress are identified and encouraged to take higher level qualifications. Apprentices' achievement in English and mathematics is high.
- Most teachers use technology exceptionally well to promote learning inside and outside the classroom. As a result, learners make very good progress and are motivated to learn. For example, the resources developed on the virtual learning environment for English as an additional language (ESOL) and performing arts extend learners' knowledge and application of skills through a range of interactive activities, research and online assessments.
- The tutorial programme for full-time learners is effective in promoting work-related skills. Learners with high needs participate in a wide range of learning activities appropriate to their personal needs and aspirations. The involvement of employers in reviewing and planning learning for apprentices is very effective.
- Learners do not develop their independent, critical-thinking skills sufficiently on some adult and level 3 study programmes. As a result, learners are over-reliant on teachers giving them information rather than developing the skills to take more responsibility for their own learning and progress.
- Learners with high needs benefit from very good support throughout their learning programmes. Learning support tutors provide timely and effective support in lessons for learners who require additional help. As a result, these learners make at least the progress expected of them and a significant minority exceed this in their lessons, for example in motor vehicle and sport, teachers inspire them to achieve and provide excellent progression opportunities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The large majority of learners and apprentices show good attitudes to learning. They display a willingness to learn, follow instructions and carry out tasks readily. Learners' behaviour in lessons is good. Learners are polite, courteous and highly respectful of staff and their peers.
- Close monitoring of attendance by senior managers has resulted in an improvement on

most courses in the current year. Overall attendance rates are now high and learners are on time for lessons. However, although attendance at English and mathematics lessons is improving, it is still too low. On a small minority of adult courses, learners' attendance and punctuality are not yet sufficiently good.

- Vocational teachers use their links with industry and employers well to ensure that learners develop commercially relevant skills to improve their employment opportunities.
- Learners and apprentices develop good skills to prepare them for work. Teachers and support staff contribute well to the development of these skills, together with the wide-ranging, additional activities, including many that are work related. Teachers make good use of occupational contexts and examples to reinforce industry standards and expectations. The college restaurant and the hairdressing salon enable learners to gain confidence in a commercial environment and develop good customer service skills.
- The development of more opportunities for purposeful work experience has resulted in most learners on 16 to 19 study programmes having the opportunity to undertake external work experience. Enrichment activities are well planned and help learners to develop their confidence, and additional work-related experiences, such as planning and running charitable events and presentations, help learners to develop teamwork and organisational skills.
- College staff provide a range of good information, advice and guidance to support learners in making career decisions; this help is provided prior to enrolment, during their studies and at the end of their programme. As a result, the proportion of 16 to 19 study programme learners who complete their course has improved. Learners are clear about their next steps in achieving their long-term career objectives. At the end of their programmes, most learners progress to higher levels of study, apprenticeships or employment.
- The tutorial programme covers topics relevant to learners' lives, including their understanding of health, well-being and mental health that prepares them well for their future. Learners have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media, at work and in their daily lives. The majority of learners understand the risks from radicalisation and extremism; however, too many apprentices have insufficient understanding of the risks of radicalisation.
- Senior managers and college staff have developed an inclusive learning environment where mutual respect and tolerance are emphasised. Most learners have a good understanding of diversity in modern Britain.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The large majority of learners attending Bolton College make good progress. Those on vocational courses develop good practical and work-related skills which reflect demanding industry standards. Progression rates of learners into training and employment are high.

- On 16 to 19 study programmes in 2015/16, learners' overall achievement rates have

improved and are above those of similar providers. Learners make good progress from their starting points in developing their skills in English and mathematics. Learners' achievement rates for achieving A* to C grades on GCSE provision are improving, but remain too low.

- Learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the additional learning support that they receive, and a higher proportion of those on level 1 and level 2 courses achieve their qualifications than among other learners. Learners who have experience of local authority care and learners from areas of high deprivation achieve equally as well, and in some cases better, than their peers.
- Learners with high needs make good progress, produce work of a high standard and achieve well, supported by excellent specialist resources. Learners become more independent in their learning and in their personal lives, with the majority reducing their need for support in learning.
- Achievement of qualifications for adult learners improved slightly in 2015/16 to around the national average. Adult learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes made good progress in achieving their qualification; however, too many adults on other adult courses made insufficient progress in achieving their potential.
- In 2015/16, not enough learners on level 3 courses made the progress expected of them compared with their starting points. However, the progress of current learners is now more closely monitored and college data shows that a high proportion of learners now make better progress on their courses.
- Achievement rates for apprentices in 2015/16 improved significantly from a low starting point and are now above those of similar providers. Significantly, more apprentices achieved their qualification in the planned time. Current apprentices are making good progress and the proportion of apprentices who complete their course so far this year has improved and indicates an improvement on the previous year.
- No significant and sustained variations exist in the performance of different groups of learners. Where staff have identified differences, they have implemented effective strategies to address them. Staff place a strong focus on the performance of those who underachieve nationally, such as young people who have experience of local authority care, and these learners make good progress.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- At the time of the inspection, there were 2,140 learners aged 16 to 19 following study programmes at the college; this represents over half of the college's provision. Learners followed vocational courses across a range of subject areas.

- Leaders plan and manage study programmes effectively to ensure that learners achieve

their qualifications and are able to progress to their next steps in education or employment. The support that learning development mentors and teaching staff provide is highly effective in monitoring learners' progress and identifying and removing barriers to learning. As a result, the majority of learners make good progress across all aspects of their study programme. Learners' attendance and punctuality are generally good.

- Teachers generally have high expectations and learners respond positively, displaying high levels of engagement. As a result, the large majority of learners make good progress. However, some teaching, particularly at level 3, lacks challenge and, where all learners work on the same task, there is little opportunity for them to make rapid progress. This results in a small minority of learners not achieving their full potential.
- Learners receive effective feedback on their work, which provides clear information on what they need to do to improve or further develop their practical skills. In a minority of cases, learners are not encouraged to correct errors in their written work.
- Teachers plan a range of activities, which learners enjoy. Learners develop good knowledge and skills and build their confidence. In science, learners confidently plan and carry out experiments to determine yield. Learners on level 1 courses develop good retail skills, for example, how to stock and price goods in a real work environment. Learners are encouraged to work cooperatively and they behave well and respect one another.
- The majority of learners have the opportunity to gain additional qualifications to enhance their employment prospects. For example, sports and public services learners gain team-leading awards.
- Teachers prepare learners well for employment and the majority of learners are now benefiting from external work experience relevant to their vocational subjects. The college has developed strong and effective links with local employers, which help learners to gain an understanding of their responsibilities as employees.
- Teachers use their specialist vocational knowledge well to make learning stimulating and relevant, linking theory and practical sessions to industry standards. Learners are proud of the good practical skills they develop, which build their confidence and help prepare them for employment. Teachers help learners to develop their communication and mathematical skills well. For example, in performing arts, learners are set competitive tasks related to 'West Side Story', which develop mathematical skills using large numbers associated with a vocational context.
- Information, advice and guidance provided by the college staff are well planned. Staff guide learners onto appropriate courses that build on their prior attainment. As a result, more learners have stayed on their courses this year. Learners with high needs on 16 to 19 study programmes benefit from additional learning support and make at least as much, and sometimes better, progress as their peers.
- There is a strong development of learners' awareness of equality and diversity themes. For example, health and social care learners demonstrate an understanding of disability awareness and how to treat people with respect. In public services, learners plan an expedition, taking into account a diverse client group.
- Learners feel safe in college and they know whom to approach if they have concerns. Teachers give a high priority to developing safe working practices within all settings.

Adult learning programmes

Requires improvement

- At the time of the inspection, there were 3,192 learners aged 19 or over on a range of vocational programmes from entry level to level 4 across 13 subject areas. The largest areas are ESOL, mathematics, English, access to higher education, hair and beauty therapy, and foundation studies.
- The standard of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the adult provision and not enough is sufficiently planned to develop learners to their full potential. In too many lessons, teachers' expectations of learners are low and they make slow progress. Learners are not sufficiently encouraged to develop independent learning and critical-thinking skills. In all ESOL classes and a minority of better lessons, however, teachers plan learning well and set targets for learners, which ensures that they make good progress and achieve.
- Assessment is not sufficiently effective and too often fails to sufficiently guide and support learners to improve their work. Teachers' assessments, both verbal and written, do not sufficiently check that learners are making progress and ensure that learning is securely established. More effective teaching includes regular questioning of learners and sampling of their work, leading to feedback that guides and encourages them to improve their work.
- On courses other than ESOL, too many learners make slow progress in developing their English and mathematical skills. A significant minority of learners do not develop good written English skills, repeating the same basic errors in spelling and punctuation.
- Teachers make effective links to employment in lessons and in practical sessions they promote professional and industrial standards well, which improves learners' understanding of the workplace. For example, in an ESOL class, learners develop their reading skills using job advertisements to match their own skills to the required specification. Health and safety and safeguarding are well promoted in lessons, which enables learners to work and behave safely with others and to be work ready on completing their course.
- Learners speak highly of the impartial information, advice and guidance they receive while on their course, which enable them to acquire a clear understanding of the steps they need to take to achieve their career aims. Learners on access to higher education programmes receive good support in applying to study at university.
- Managers of adult programmes have a good understanding of their local employment and community needs. They work well with the local authority, employers, Jobcentre Plus and community groups to ensure learners have access to programmes with relevant skills to enhance their career opportunities and life skills. The access to higher education programme offers good opportunities for those wishing to re-enter education, with most progressing well.
- Learners generally display positive behaviour and attitudes to their learning and develop good life- and work-related skills. However, low attendance on too many adult courses and poor punctuality in a minority of lessons disrupt learning and do not reinforce the

development of a good work ethic.

- Learners develop and adopt a positive awareness of equality and diversity and embrace British values, which are promoted well throughout lessons. For example, in an English GCSE lesson, there was a good discussion on, and analysis of, the attitude of Victorian writers to race and racial stereotyping and how these affect readers today.

Apprenticeships

Good

- The college has 473 apprentices and 294 advanced apprentices on a broad range of programmes, with the majority being on construction, childcare, motor vehicle and electro-technical programmes. Smaller numbers are following programmes in business administration, hairdressing, supporting teaching and learning in schools, accountancy and computing. There are 10 higher-level apprentices. Senior leaders have effectively stopped all subcontracted apprenticeship provision, except for provision for a few learners who are completing their programmes with Watertrain Limited.
- Senior leaders and managers actively promote high achievement of apprentices. They monitor performance at all levels effectively and develop programmes to meet the needs of the local and regional community. For example, the college has a long-standing relationship with a number of employers in the North West region to deliver specialist apprenticeship training in roof slating and tiling.
- Teachers and assessors provide good and effective support to apprentices both in college and within the workplace. Apprentices benefit from good on- and off-the-job training which enables them to develop a high standard of vocational skills and to achieve their qualifications. They develop a good understanding of professional standards and develop the confidence to apply these in the workplace.
- Assessments in the workplace are well planned, with employers contributing effectively to planning assessment opportunities for apprentices. Assessors ask learners probing questions to determine their wider understanding of key topics and to develop their analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Review meetings of apprentices' progress are used effectively by assessors, to check and reinforce apprentices' understanding of the wider aspects of equality and diversity. Target-setting is effectively helping apprentices understand what they need to do to progress. Consequently, a significant majority of apprentices are on target to achieve their qualification within planned timescales. In childcare, hair and beauty and motor vehicle, apprentices are encouraged to complete their apprenticeship early and to progress to a higher-level apprenticeship.
- Apprentices attend regularly and standards of behaviour are good. They are tolerant and respectful with their teachers and peers, which promotes a positive learning culture. Apprentices enjoy their learning and use the skills and knowledge they have acquired to progress successfully in the workplace. For example, in one childcare centre, two apprentices have progressed and now hold management positions.
- The large majority of apprentices develop their English and mathematical skills and

achieve their qualifications. Apprentices develop a good understanding of how to apply their skills in English and mathematics within their vocational work. However, on a minority of courses, apprentices are not being encouraged to correct errors in spelling and grammar within their written work.

- Teachers and assessors promote equality and diversity well. Apprentices have respect for their peers and college staff. Apprentices understand British values such as tolerance and respect and value individual differences. Apprentices are encouraged to celebrate diversity at college and in the workplace. For example, in childcare, the employer and the apprentices created displays and activities based on multicultural celebrations, which included Eid, Christmas and Diwali, and these were placed on display in their respective nurseries.
- Apprentices know how to stay safe and are aware of what action to take if they have any concerns. A few apprentices were not sufficiently clear about the dangers of radicalisation.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- The college currently has 144 learners receiving additional high-needs funding from 10 local authorities. Over 61 learners are enrolled on specialist discrete learning development programmes, including work-related and personal development, and the remainder of learners are taking a wide range of vocational courses.
 - Managers use the funding for learners with high needs very well. External agencies, healthcare professionals and parents and carers contribute to the designing of personalised programmes that build on learners' prior attainment, increase their independence and enable them to progress to further study and employment. Learners have progressed to university courses and have set up their own businesses.
 - Assessment of learners' starting points is rigorous and ensures that learners are offered a programme that meets their learning and support needs. Transition arrangements are well planned and managed to enable learners to make the progression to college life. Learners receive regular careers advice in tutorials and reviews and most have realistic goals and aspirations for the future.
 - Learners benefit from very effective support. The use of specialist support staff and a range of specialist resources enable them to increase their independence and confidence, and overcome potential barriers to learning. For example, deaf learners are able to communicate effectively during lessons through specialist signers, and visually impaired learners are able to work more independently on their assignments using a range of specialist software programmes. Consequently, support is skilfully reduced as learners become more independent over time.
- The very large majority of learners with high needs make good progress and achieve

qualifications relevant to their programme of study. Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan learning that is both challenging and interesting. For example, catering learners produce high-quality meals for the college bistro; they are able to work effectively with others and undertake a range of challenging practical tasks in a demanding working environment that mirrors industry standards. Consequently, a significant majority of learners make good progress and produce standards of work that meet and sometimes exceed the required standards. However, a small minority of teachers do not use assessment information to inform their planning and meet learners' individual needs.

- The large majority of learners are provided with regular opportunities to develop their English and mathematical skills, in both specialist and vocational lessons, and most are making good progress from their starting points. For example, sports learners are able to calculate and record variations in their fitness rates, and deaf learners, through the development of their reading skills, are able to interpret subtitled information better when watching the television. Learners are not consistently encouraged to identify and correct their spelling and grammar.
- Most teachers use a range of effective assessment methods which enable them to check understanding and accurately gauge learners' progress. Directed questions are used to assess learners' understanding and further probing questions are used to engage the most able learners in higher order thinking. In practical lessons, teachers effectively use direct observation to assess learners' practical skills and competencies.
- The large majority of teachers set negotiated short- and long-term targets which are linked to learners' personal development and independence, and through verbal and written feedback, learners understand what they have to do to improve and make further progress.
- The development of learners' personal, social and employability skills is good. In lessons that prepare learners for work, they effectively develop their interview skills, learn to write a curriculum vitae and improve their job-search skills through a range of online activities. Most learners undertake relevant work experience with employers. For example, childcare learners have gained placements at local nursery and primary schools.
- Learners demonstrate an informed awareness of safeguarding procedures and know what to do if they have any concerns, both inside and outside college. Learners understand the risks associated with using social media and how to stay safe online and most are able to explain the risks posed by accessing extremist sites.
- A large majority of learners with high needs progress into further or higher levels of study. However, the number of learners, where appropriate, who progress into either paid or voluntary employment, is low.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130495
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	7,499
Principal	Bill Webster
Telephone number	01204 482000
Website	www.boltoncollege.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	618	1,743	767	932	742	517	13	304
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	252	221	86	208	4	7		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	NA		NA					
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	NA							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	144							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors	Watertrain Limited							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Stephen Miller, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrea Machell	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Price	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Bruce	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Scanlan	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Maura Cummins	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Angus	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Smith	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to: www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to: www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017