

Inspection of The Bournemouth and Poole College

Inspection dates:

14 to 17 January 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

The Bournemouth and Poole College has two main sites, one in Bournemouth and one in Poole. Leaders provide a range of different subjects at each campus. For example, service industries, business, sports and public services are offered at Bournemouth, while engineering, construction, art and design, media, health and science are offered at Poole. A further specialist site, the Fulcrum Centre in Poole, provides training in boatbuilding and carpentry.

At the time of the inspection, there were 2,813 students on education programmes for young people, 1,483 students studying adult learning programmes, 1,951 apprentices and 280 students with high needs.

Education programmes for young people are offered at entry level to level 3. A high proportion of students study English and/or mathematics at GCSE alongside their vocational or technical programmes. Leaders provide T levels in a range of subjects, including digital, education and health.

Adult learning programmes are offered in a range of sectors, the largest being

foundations for learning and life and health and social care. Courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) are provided from entry level to level 2.

The largest apprenticeship programmes are in construction, engineering and healthcare. Over half of apprenticeships are level 3, over a quarter are level 2, and the remainder are levels 4 to 6. Just under half of all apprentices are aged 16 to 18.

Students with high needs typically have education, health and care plans (EHC plan). Around a fifth of students with high needs study programmes specifically designed for them at the Poole campus. These include programmes to support the transition to further study, employment and adulthood. Other students with high needs study vocational and technical programmes across all campuses.

Leaders work with two subcontractors, both offering specialist apprenticeship provision.

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

Students and apprentices at all campuses enjoy their learning. They are taught by subject experts who use their industry knowledge well to enrich their teaching. Students and apprentices acquire up-to-date knowledge and skills and the behaviours expected in industry settings. This prepares them well for their next steps.

Students and apprentices develop deeper knowledge and become fluent in using their new skills. Teachers present information and demonstrate skills clearly. They respond to individual needs by adjusting explanations and tasks skilfully. Teachers plan and provide students and apprentices with the time and opportunities needed to practise what they have learned. As a result, students and apprentices are prepared well for their assessments, and most achieve well.

Students with high needs who study programmes specifically designed for them gain a wide range of useful experiences both in and outside of college. Teachers ensure that students with high needs work towards the targets in their EHC plan in a meaningful way to support them towards their next steps. For example, students engage in conservation projects in the local community. This supports them to develop timekeeping, teamwork and communication skills. Students know their individual targets and how the tasks they are given help them to work towards their goals. Teachers use communication strategies, such as signing and the use of technology, well to ensure all students can access the full curriculum. As a result, students with high needs feel included and well supported.

Students studying education programmes for young people are encouraged to achieve their best by staff who have high expectations. Teachers know their students well and successfully motivate them. Many students widen their experiences through high-quality work experiences or work placements. For example, students on the T-Level early years course put child development theory into practice in a range of early years and community settings. Most students gain insight into the world of work through activities, visits and guest speakers. However, students in a few areas, such as business and sports, have limited access to real work environments, and participation in external work experience is too low in these areas.

Apprentices learn about fundamental concepts early in their apprenticeship. They practise their skills using high-quality resources that mirror those used in industry such as the full range of engines and propulsion systems used in marine engineering. This enables apprentices to make valuable contributions to their employers from an early stage. Leaders design apprenticeships in collaboration with employers to ensure apprentices gain the skills needed for successful careers locally and nationally.

Adult students study purposeful curriculums that support them to achieve their goals. For example, adults studying ESOL improve their confidence in using spoken English and the accuracy of their pronunciation. This enables them to participate

more actively in their communities. Adults studying access to higher education (HE) health professions achieve the high grades they need to gain places to study at university and contribute to national skills shortages.

Students and apprentices develop their confidence, resilience and character as a result of their experiences at the college. Teachers plan activities that put students and apprentices outside of their comfort zone such as communicating in different ways with new people. Staff working with students and apprentices monitor their progress well. They make timely interventions to provide additional support and guidance when needed.

Young students are taught a range of age-appropriate topics during tutorial sessions. This helps them develop a meaningful understanding of healthy relationships and the importance of being a responsible citizen. However, young apprentices do not have the same opportunities to discuss topics relevant to them. Apprentices and students often have only a superficial understanding of how to stay safe from radicalisation and extremism. Teachers do not reinforce this learning to help apprentices and students relate the importance of this knowledge to their courses or their personal lives.

Students and apprentices enjoy the safe and purposeful environment at all campuses. They appreciate the presence of security staff who help them feel reassured and welcome. Students and apprentices are polite and respectful towards staff and their peers.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders and managers work effectively with a wide range of stakeholders to identify local and national skills needs. They play an integral part in the local authority's strategic skills groups such as the Dorset Manufacturing Engineering Cluster and the Dorset Skills Group. Leaders work collaboratively with local universities, Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole and Dorset councils, Dorset Chamber of Commerce and large employers such as Sunseeker International and, more recently, Kier Construction. They use these relationships well to identify skills needs in the region and design courses to meet most of these needs. For example, leaders have co-designed the semi-skilled boat builder apprenticeship to upskill local people to meet local demands. They are also beginning to respond to the demand from local employers for short, skills-based courses by developing Skills Bootcamps, including in green skills.

Leaders work closely with stakeholders to meet most gaps in provision identified in the local skills improvement plan. For example, they work with Bournemouth University to offer nursing and allied professions apprenticeships. Leaders have invested in a simulated ward in the university centre at the Poole campus to teach students on clinical programmes in a realistic environment.

Leaders have established effective employer advisory boards, particularly in engineering. This has led to investment in specialist physical resources such as electric propulsion for marine vessels. Leaders are beginning to bring together employers from other curriculum areas, including construction, to share ideas for future development.

Managers and staff work well with relevant stakeholders on most courses to make sure that the curriculum provides learners with the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours employers need. This is having the greatest impact in areas such as media, art and engineering, where stakeholder engagement is longstanding and well developed. The contribution of stakeholders in the design and implementation of the curriculum is less well developed in areas such as level 1 automotive, access to HE, ESOL and the T level in education where relationships are at an early stage.

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

Leaders have a clear strategic vision to provide high-quality education and training to all students and apprentices. They have developed an inclusive culture where staff feel empowered to make a positive difference to students and apprentices. Leaders and managers have improved staff morale; staff are proud to work at the college.

Leaders and managers ensure that curriculums are well designed and sequenced, enabling students and apprentices to build on what they know and can do incrementally. For example, teachers of the level 2 beauty course teach students client communication and care before students work with external clients. Level 6 engineering apprentices are taught core mathematics and material sciences before learning manufacturing methods and project management.

Teachers use a range of effective teaching and assessment strategies to help students and apprentices remember what they have learned. For example, teachers revisit prior learning, use effective questioning techniques and quizzes to check knowledge and reinforce theory knowledge during practical sessions.

Teachers set appropriately demanding tasks, enabling students and apprentices to produce work of at least the expected standard. For example, level 3 art and design teachers challenge students to create and evaluate photographic documentaries, and students complete these to a very high standard.

Most teachers provide useful feedback to students and apprentices that helps them know what they can do to improve further. For example, in level 2 science, students respond positively to advice from teachers and improve their subsequent work. Adult students on online courses are given clear and constructive feedback on their written work and suggestions for further research.

Teachers support students and apprentices to use technical vocabulary accurately.

For example, level 1 automotive teachers identify common spelling errors and proactively teach the correct spelling and use of technical terminology.

Teachers skilfully enable students and apprentices to develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. As a result, most students and apprentices, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve their qualifications. However, too few students achieve their GCSE mathematics qualifications. Too often, this hinders students from progressing to higher-level study.

Most students and apprentices, including those with high needs, progress to positive destinations such as further study, higher education and employment. Most apprentices remain employed by their employers and many gain promotion to more senior roles.

Leaders and managers have introduced pre-internships and internships and greater opportunities for students with high needs to develop work-ready behaviours. However, leaders and managers have not yet ensured that students with high needs are prepared for, and participate in, high-quality work experience as rapidly as they could.

Staff working with students with high needs are trained to use appropriate strategies and interventions to support students to overcome barriers to their learning. Leaders ensure that students have access to specialist support staff and therapists where needed. This enables students with high needs across all areas of the college to achieve well and make progress in line with their peers.

Leaders and managers ensure that the requirements of an apprenticeship are met. Leaders respond well to the needs of employers by designing flexible training schedules and adding additional specific content. For example, level 2 commis chef apprentices are taught how to prepare complex sauces and dressings used at the high-end restaurants they work for. However, leaders have not ensured that meetings to review apprentices' progress are used effectively across all apprenticeships. In a few cases, they do not communicate with employers well enough to ensure they know how best to support their apprentices.

Staff model the high expectations they have for students and apprentices well. Staff, students and apprentices actively embrace an inclusive environment. Students are taught to appreciate and respect diversity and display high levels of respect and tolerance. Staff set high expectations for attendance. Consequently, most students and apprentices attend well. However, in a minority of areas, including adult courses, students attend less frequently, resulting in missed learning.

Leaders and managers ensure that most students and apprentices have access to suitable careers advice and guidance so they are aware of their future options. Students aiming to go to university are supported well by their tutors to make appropriate choices and complete applications.

Leaders and managers use effective systems to oversee and improve the quality of education. They identify areas for improvement accurately and put suitable and timely actions in place to make improvements. For example, they identify specific training needs and put in place training to support up-to-date industry skills and teaching skills, including the development and use of artificial intelligence. Leaders maintain appropriate oversight of the small amount of subcontracted provision to ensure it remains high quality.

Governors provide strong strategic oversight, responding appropriately to priorities to develop provision that supports the local community, including members of the community who are disadvantaged. Governors scrutinise the insightful reports they receive from senior leaders. They take part actively in meetings to discuss the quality of provision and engage in learning walks to sample first-hand the experiences of students and apprentices. Governors challenge leaders effectively to make improvements and are ambitious for the future of the college.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Identify and implement actions to increase the proportion of students achieving GCSE mathematics with the grades they need to progress to higher levels of education and training.
- Increase participation in meaningful work experience for students on education programmes for young people and students with high needs.
- Improve students' and apprentices' understanding of personal development topics relevant to their study and personal lives.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130652
Address	North Road Poole Dorset BH14 0LS
Contact number	01202 747600
Website	www.thecollege.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Philip Sayles
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	11 to 14 January 2022
Main subcontractors	Bournemouth University Rockley Watersports Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Lowenna Bradley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul James	His Majesty's Inspector
Nick Crombie	His Majesty's Inspector
Louise Rowley	Ofsted Inspector
Nikki Sendell	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lacey	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Yuille	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Cliff Shaw	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicki Adams	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Battersby	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Alexander	His Majesty's Inspector
Oliver Symons	Ofsted Inspector
Pino Butler	Ofsted Inspector
Matt Hann	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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