

Inspection of Barnet and Southgate College

Inspection dates: 8 to 11 March 2022

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	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Barnet and Southgate College (BSC) is a medium-sized general further education college. The college has four sites based in High Barnet, Southgate, Colindale and Edmonton Green. Most of the college's learners come from the London boroughs of Barnet and Enfield.

At the time of the inspection, there were 7,246 learners enrolled at the college. Of these, 4,529 were on adult learning programmes, 2,630 were on education programmes for young people, and 87 learners were on apprenticeships. There were 323 learners in receipt of high needs funding.

BSC offers a broad curriculum in most subject areas for full and part-time learners. The largest subject area in the college is English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), followed by courses in sport, construction, health and social care, early years and pre-employment training.

BSC subcontracts a small part of its adult learning provision to two subcontractors. There were 495 learners on adult learning programmes across these subcontractors. The largest subcontractor is Promise Training Limited.

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

Learners and apprentices greatly value their time at Barnet and Southgate College. Staff encourage learners to have high aspirations for themselves and to set ambitious targets for their futures.

Learners find the college a welcoming and inclusive place in which to study. For example, staff effectively integrate learners with high needs into vocational and academic programmes, where appropriate. As a result, learners with high needs feel part of the college community and develop essential practical and social skills needed for adult life and work.

Learners behave exceptionally well in their lessons, placements and at work. They are polite, courteous and highly respectful of each other and their teachers. Learners are attentive and join in class discussions enthusiastically. They develop positive relationships with their peers and work well together and independently.

Learners benefit from the support their teachers give them to complete their qualifications. Teachers provide catch up and one-to-one sessions to learners who fall behind to get them back on track with their studies. As a result, learners feel well supported and retention on courses is high.

Learners are motivated and committed to their studies. They highly value the new knowledge and skills they gain. For example, staff teach ESOL learners about British culture and values, which helps them integrate better into society. ESOL learners also improve their ability to communicate through their course, which increases their employment prospects.

A small minority of adult learners, for example those studying electrical installation, English and mathematics are less satisfied with their experience at the college. In electrical installation, learners have been frustrated by staffing changes and in English and Mathematics by not having sufficient teaching time to develop their knowledge in preparation for their examinations. Consequently, too many learners do not achieve these qualifications.

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

Leaders have developed a rich and coherent curriculum offer that provides learners with the opportunity to study a range of programmes and subjects at different levels. Learners have a wide and flexible range of options to study in the daytime, evening, at weekends, and online. The curriculum is appropriately designed so that most learners develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to successfully progress to higher level courses, go to university or gain employment.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have established highly effective partnerships with local employers and regional education and skills networks. They use their partnerships

well to inform what they teach on each course. For example, leaders work effectively with local agencies such as jobcentre plus, large recruitment agencies and employers to shape the curriculum for sector-based work academy programmes (SWAPs). The curriculum successfully provides adult learners with good opportunities to progress to employment in the Civil Service and construction industry. Partner organisations highly value the pivotal role that the college plays in addressing the training needs of their local communities.

Staff provide effective support to meet the individual needs of learners with high needs and take into consideration their aspirations. For example, staff ensure that learners with high needs receive the therapeutic input they require to succeed on their programmes. Learners benefit from therapies, including physiotherapy, music, occupational, hydrotherapy and rebound therapy. Teachers effectively integrate these therapies into the curriculum through strong working partnerships with therapy teams. Consequently, learners with high needs achieve as well as their peers.

Most teachers plan and teach a logical curriculum, through which learners build new knowledge, skills and behaviours incrementally over time. For example, on sports courses, teachers start with teaching theory in the first year so that learners can securely apply this knowledge to their project work in the second year. In ESOL, teachers teach speaking and listening modules first, before focusing on reading, and then writing skills. Teachers ensure that learners continually practise all four skills throughout their programme. As a result, learners who in the main want to prioritise their speaking skills gain confidence in their skills when they pass the speaking and listening exam early in their studies.

Leaders and managers have successfully created a culture of learning and meaningful professional development that is well received by teachers. Teaching staff benefit from a range of training opportunities, such as a level 5 teaching apprenticeship programme, industry placements and mentoring support. As a result, teachers improve their teaching practice.

Teachers use a range of highly effective strategies to teach their subjects. In plumbing courses, for example, teachers give young learners several opportunities to repeat tasks, such as taking measurements before bending a pipe, until they master the technique. As a result, learners gain confidence, produce practical work of a high standard, and develop the high-level technical skills in plumbing they require to gain employment in the sector.

In apprenticeships, teachers with relevant industry experience skilfully lead apprentices through practical activities to develop their skills to a professional standard. For example, apprentices in gas engineering programmes learn to work competently on a wide range of boilers, water storage units and heating devices. Teachers use animations effectively in order to show apprentices the procedure of gas venting needed to establish the safe operation of the equipment and installation in accordance with specific industry standards. As a result, apprentices develop a sound understanding of safe working practices relevant to their industry.

Most teachers make expert use of assessment to check what learners have learned and correct any errors and misunderstandings swiftly. They use this information well to set

targets for learners to improve their work. On a few programmes, however, the quality of teachers' feedback to learners is not consistently good. For example, on SWAPs, teachers do not provide learners with the feedback they need to improve their written English skills. As a result, learners continue to make the same mistakes, such as not using capital letters correctly. In a minority of subjects, teachers do not systematically check learners' understanding and therefore miss opportunities to clarify any misconceptions they may have.

Staff ensure that learners on study programmes have access to meaningful work placements. For example, learners on health and social care programmes complete placements in a range of different care settings. This enables learners to develop and fine-tune transferable skills, such as planning and communication, and develop a thorough understanding of the variety of different service users they may support in their careers. In sports, learners on level two programmes complete their placements in local schools where they practice their coaching skills with primary school pupils. Through their placements, learners gain valuable industry experience which prepares them well for work and further study.

Staff rigorously reinforce with learners the importance of high attendance and punctuality. They use effective recognition and reward strategies to improve learners' attendance. Most learners understand well the importance of attending and being on time for lessons. As a result, overall attendance has improved across the college since their previous inspection. However, attendance remains too low on adult English and mathematics courses.

Leaders ensure that learners receive impartial careers advice and guidance that is tailored to their programmes. For example, staff discuss frequently with learners the different careers available within their chosen fields. Staff provide learners with helpful and informative careers advice about universities, apprenticeships and employment, and a high proportion of learners progress to positive destinations. However, apprentices do not receive sufficient careers advice, and consequently, many do not know about the range of roles and opportunities available to them within their sector.

Leaders provide a diverse range of enrichment opportunities that enable learners to develop their skills, talents and interests. These include the chance to take part in fitness training, competitive sports and the opportunity to train to elite level with a number of professional sports organisations. Staff also organise cross college competitions, such as an art competition during Black History Month, which enable learners to demonstrate their talents to a wider audience. Learners go on trips and can join clubs, such as the newly formed book club and eco club. As a result, many learners extend their knowledge beyond their qualification and gain wider social skills and confidence.

Most learners are clear on how British values apply at college and in their wider lives. In most subjects, tutors facilitate discussions to ensure that learners explore each other's opinions respectfully and are able to link British values to their subject. However, on a small number of programmes, teachers do not revisit the information learners receive about British values. As a result, a minority of learners do not remember what they have been taught and do not see the relevance of British values to their lives.

Governance arrangements are highly effective. Governors bring a wealth of wide-ranging experience to the board. Governors meet with senior leaders frequently and visit lessons to look at the effectiveness of teaching. As a result, governors have an accurate understanding of the college's strengths and areas for development. They support and challenge senior leaders well to secure improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have successfully created a culture of mutual respect and tolerance where learners feel safe. Staff look after their learners exceptionally well. The well-qualified safeguarding and student services teams provide highly effective care and support for learners. The vast majority of learners who receive support remain on their courses and achieve their qualifications.

Staff know the safeguarding risks their learners face at different campuses. They work closely with a range of welfare organisations that train learners and staff in relevant safeguarding topics. Learners benefit from valuable information on subjects such as mental health, appropriate sexual behaviours, the dangers of knife crime and domestic abuse, and the risks associated with radicalisation. Most learners understand these issues and know how to report them.

Learners benefit from suitable training on how to keep themselves safe, including when online. For example, learners with high needs can recall information about personal safety when travelling independently on public transport and the need for an emergency contact number if a problem should arise.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that teachers in all subjects consistently check learners' knowledge and understanding and provide high-quality feedback so that learners know what they have done well and how to improve their work.
- Leaders should ensure that all learners have access to sufficient teaching time and suitable resources to ensure that they are sufficiently prepared for their final assessments and examinations.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices have access to effective and impartial careers advice and guidance.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130425
Address	Wood Street Barnet Hertfordshire EN5 4AZ
Contact number	020 8200 8300
Website	www.barnetsouthgate.ac.uk
CEO	Darren Mepham
Provider type	General further education college
Dates of previous inspection	4 to 7 December 2018
Main subcontractors	Promise Training Limited The Finance and Management Business School Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal and assistant chief executive, 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

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