

Calderdale College

General further education college

Inspection dates

30 January – 2 February 2018

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	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Outstanding
Outcomes for learners	Good	Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Governors and senior leaders have created a culture of high expectations. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college and use this knowledge well to help the college to improve.
- The proportion of learners on 16 to 19 study programmes who achieve their qualification has increased and is now high.
- Current apprentices are making substantial and sustained progress from their starting points.
- The principal and senior leaders are very effective in identifying and meeting the skills needs of local stakeholders and employers.
- Teachers and assessors are well qualified and highly experienced; they use their skills well to motivate and engage their learners and apprentices.
- Learners and apprentices benefit from a highly inclusive culture, and are enthusiastic and positive about their learning. They have a high level of respect for staff and for their peers.
- Managers do not hold teachers to account well enough for the progress that learners make and the outcomes that they achieve.
- Too few learners on 16 to 19 study programmes achieve high grades in GCSE mathematics.
- Learners' attendance is too low on GCSE mathematics courses and on adult learning programmes.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Calderdale College is a general further education college in the Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale. It provides study programmes, adult learning programmes and apprenticeships.
- Around a half of the borough's 200,000 inhabitants reside in the town of Halifax, with the majority of the remainder residing in smaller market towns. The borough has significant areas of deprivation, with almost half of all Calderdale residents living in the most deprived areas. Calderdale is home to over 8,500 businesses, the vast majority of which employ fewer than 10 people. There is a small number of large employers across key sectors in the local economy including in financial services, health care and an expanding digital sector in business services and creative industries.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that managers set and review precise performance objectives for all teachers so that teachers are held to account closely for the progress that their learners make and the outcomes that they achieve.
- Increase the proportion of learners achieving high grades in GCSE mathematics by ensuring that teachers of mathematics provide learning that challenges learners to make rapid progress.
- Ensure that staff make full use of the college's attendance policies and procedures to improve the attendance of learners on all courses to at least the college target.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Governors and senior leaders have created a culture of high expectations that has led to the recent marked improvements in achievement rates on study programmes and in the significant progress that apprentices now make. Leaders have communicated successfully to staff and stakeholders their ambition that the college will continue to build on recent improvements for all areas of the curriculum.
- The principal and senior leaders are very effective in identifying and meeting the skills development needs of learners, employers and other stakeholders in Calderdale and the West Yorkshire region. Leaders collaborate effectively with other college leaders in the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges to design programmes and to secure additional funding to meet regional skills development priorities. As a result, leaders have successfully introduced curriculum changes and new programmes in local priority areas such as digital technologies and healthcare.
- Leaders and managers work closely with employers to implement new apprenticeship standards. Innovative plans are in place to introduce scholarships with high-profile local employers that will enable learners to obtain apprenticeships with these firms.
- Leaders have established a culture of accountability for managers in the college. They use up-to-date and accurate management information about learners' attendance, retention and progress to hold managers to account for each strategic priority. This enables leaders and governors to measure the progress that they make and identify any necessary further improvements.
- All staff participate in a good range of relevant professional development that meets their individual needs. Leaders and managers ensure that training links closely to college-wide improvement priorities relating to teaching, learning and assessment. Less-confident teachers receive coaching and support to improve their practice, while confident practitioners can engage in action research.
- The management of the small number of subcontractors that the college uses is appropriate and proportionate to risk. Subcontractors are routinely subject to college lesson observation procedures and engage in professional development activities provided by the college.
- Leaders and managers have designed a curriculum that enables learners to participate in a wide range of activities to raise their awareness about life in modern Britain. As a result, learners respect their peers and staff, behave well and are very tolerant of the different views and personal beliefs of others. Learners have a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives.
- Leaders take effective steps to ensure that learners have good access to impartial careers advice and guidance. Consequently, a high proportion of learners and apprentices progress to further studies, apprenticeships or employment related to their programme.
- Leaders and managers have made improvements to the college's self-assessment procedures. These are now more inclusive, and involve staff and governors in the final grading. Self-assessment considers a wide range of evidence, leading to broadly accurate evaluations of college-wide strengths and identification of appropriate targets for

improvement. Although the majority of subject area self-assessments are evaluative and accurate, in a few cases managers do not identify accurately areas of strength or where improvements are needed.

- Managers too often set teachers performance objectives that are too general and not linked sufficiently to the findings of observations of teaching and learning. As a result, they do not hold teachers to account well enough for the progress that learners make and the outcomes that they achieve. However, leaders and managers deal more robustly with the small minority of staff whose performance is not good enough. A comprehensive range of support and supervision enables a good proportion of these underperforming teachers to make the necessary improvements to their practice. Those few members of staff who have been unable to improve have left the college.
- Leaders and managers have not yet secured sufficient improvement in the quality of teaching in mathematics, despite strenuous efforts to do so. They have appointed a new manager and specialist staff but, so far, these plans have met with only limited success.

The governance of the provider

- Governors are highly committed to the college and share leaders' ambitions that it will be successful in meeting the needs of the learners, communities and businesses that it serves. Governors regularly review and reflect on the value of the expertise they bring and their individual contributions, to ensure that they continue to be effective.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the college and areas where further improvement is required because senior leaders provide them with comprehensive reports. They support well wider aspects of college life such as curriculum area self-assessment reviews, college open evenings and celebration events. Governors use their knowledge to support and challenge leaders effectively to achieve the college's strategic priorities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The college is fully compliant with its statutory duties to ensure that all staff, volunteers and visitors have undergone appropriate checks to work with children and vulnerable adults. Managers responsible for safeguarding are suitably qualified and experienced. They deal with safeguarding concerns appropriately, including referrals to specialist agencies.
- Leaders and managers responsible for safeguarding maintain very effective links with local specialist agencies to provide learners with advice and support. Staff maintain an up-to-date awareness of local events and circumstances that could have a bearing on the safety and welfare of learners and staff.
- Leaders have responded well to the growing number of learners identified as experiencing mental health and well-being issues. They have ensured that appropriate support is available to these learners.
- Leaders and managers maintain good links with police counter-terrorism specialists that help them implement the 'Prevent' duty successfully and take appropriate steps to protect learners from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. However, adult learners' understanding of these risks is too often superficial.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and assessors provide helpful and effective feedback that enables learners and apprentices to make good or better progress in lessons and in their written work. Teachers clearly link their feedback to learners' prior levels of attainment and tailor it to meet their individual needs.
- Teachers create a friendly and welcoming learning environment that enables learners to participate fully in lessons. Consequently, learners are motivated and enjoy learning. For example, teachers of courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) quickly get to know the backgrounds of learners from different countries. They use this knowledge well to ensure that learners settle in quickly and develop good communication skills and confidence. The good relationships between teachers and learners are a notable feature of life in college and learners cite this as a reason why they enjoy coming to college so much.
- Learners benefit from very high-quality classrooms and other learning environments. For example, learners on sports programmes benefit from industry-standard sports facilities and well-resourced classrooms equipped with anatomical models, informative printed resources and access to information and communication technology.
- The very large majority of staff are highly qualified and experienced, and use their skills well to motivate their learners and apprentices. Learners appreciate their teachers' expertise and up-to-date knowledge. As a result, learners are curious and keen to learn more.
- Teachers effectively encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning. This enables learners to make progress between lessons and to improve their independent research skills. Learners make regular and productive use of the college's online learning system to extend their skills and knowledge.
- Teaching, learning and assessment on GCSE mathematics for learners aged 16 to 19 require improvement. Teachers' activities to address gaps in learners' knowledge and skills are not sufficiently engaging to capture their interest. Too many learners retaking examinations in this subject become demotivated and do not make the progress of which they are capable. Too many teachers on study programmes do not ensure that learners improve their English and mathematics rapidly enough.
- A small minority of teachers do not routinely challenge learners to achieve as much as they can. They often plan and deliver activities that are too easy for some learners.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- The very large majority of learners and apprentices feel safe in college and at work. They know how and to whom they should report any concerns and they appreciate managers' and teachers' prompt and effective responses. Learners value the work done by security and reception staff on their behalf. They know that the vigilance of staff contributes significantly to the welfare of the college community.
- The very large majority of learners benefit greatly from the pastoral support that they receive from progress coaches and from learner services. Staff in learner services have developed strong relationships with external agencies, including social services, health

services, housing, probation and other partners to ensure that learners and apprentices receive high-quality professional support. Learners appreciate how this support enables them to overcome obstacles so that they can attend college and progress.

- Learners benefit from a very inclusive college community; learners from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds mix very well with each other. Learners are highly appreciative of the lack of discrimination and bullying in college. The college has a well-deserved reputation locally and regionally for its commitment to equality and inclusion.
- Learners and apprentices behave extremely well. They are courteous and demonstrate a strong commitment to the college's core values of respect and tolerance. Staff deal promptly and expertly with minor instances of poor learner behaviour. Staff supervise social areas well and impress upon learners the importance of professional behaviour and communication at all times. Learners are very polite and helpful to visitors and clearly feel very proud of their college.
- Learners take advantage of effective advice and guidance that staff relate closely to learners' next steps in education and to their future careers. Expert careers guidance staff cater well for the college's different learners. These include migrant and refugee learners with international qualifications who need guidance to transfer these qualifications to the United Kingdom and to make positive next steps.
- Learners develop confidence and self-esteem and take pride in their work. The college is characterised by a culture of hard work. Learners and apprentices are very enthusiastic and positive about their learning and clearly enjoy their studies. Learners rightly have a strong sense of their own potential and look forward to rewarding and successful careers.
- The large majority of learners and apprentices produce work of a standard appropriate to their level of study and to the needs of the industries for which they are training or studying.
- Attendance is too low on adult learning programmes, and on GCSE courses on 16 to 19 study programmes. As a result, learners on these programmes and courses do not make progress as quickly as they could.
- Too many adult learners have only a superficial understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Other learners, especially those on 16 to 19 study programmes, learn about these risks in tutorial sessions and know how to keep themselves safe.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Achievement rates for learners on 16 to 19 study programmes have risen over the last three years, and the very large proportion of learners now achieve their qualifications. However, in 2016/17, too many learners on level 3 programmes made insufficient progress from their starting points.
- A high proportion of learners on adult learning programmes achieve their qualifications, and now do so at a rate similar to those in other providers. Achievement rates on entry level, level 1 and level 2 qualifications are high. However, too few of the relatively small proportion of adult learners on level 3 programmes achieve their qualifications.
- The large majority of current learners on 16 to 19 study programme and adult learning

programmes make good progress on their courses. They are developing the confidence, knowledge and practical skills which they will need in employment.

- The proportion of apprentices completing their programmes in the planned time has improved significantly over the last three years and is now high. Current apprentices make excellent progress in developing relevant work skills and attitudes, and a very high proportion are on track to complete their programmes in the allotted time.
- There are no significant achievement gaps between different groups of learners on 16 to 19 study programmes. Through improved use of data, managers and teachers have addressed historical gaps in achievement, with particular improvements for male learners and those of Asian backgrounds. The achievements of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have improved over a three-year period and are now higher than those of their peers. However, on adult learning programmes, White learners have achieved slightly less well than learners from other ethnic groups over the last three years.
- The rate of progression onto the next level of qualification is very high and improving for learners studying at entry level, level 1 and level 2 on 16 to 19 study programme and adult learning programmes. The very large majority of learners and apprentices who complete their programmes successfully progress onto positive destinations that link closely to their qualifications and career aspirations.
- Learners for whom the college receives high-needs funding make good progress in achieving their qualifications and developing their independence, confidence and employment skills. As a result, the very large majority of learners progress onto positive destinations, with most moving on the next level of their programme and the rest to supported internships.
- Too few learners on 16 to 19 study programmes gain GCSE mathematics at legacy grades A* to C (reformed grades 4 to 9) or functional skills in mathematics at level 1. Most of those who take entry-level qualifications are successful. The proportion of learners on 16 to 19 study programmes who achieve their GCSE English at legacy grades A* to C (reformed grades 4 to 9) is above that of similar providers.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The college currently has just over 3,100 learners on a wide range of vocational 16 to 19 study programmes. The large majority of learners are on entry level, level 1 or level 2 programmes, with around one fifth on level 3 programmes.
- Managers recognised the urgent need to improve the progress of learners on level 3 programmes. Their new more rigorous approaches to target-setting, regular learner assessments and targeted staff development have resulted in better in-year progress for current learners on these programmes.
- Teachers ensure that learners make good progress in developing their vocational skills and gain good levels of knowledge and understanding in practical subjects. Staff and learners have very positive working relationships; this encourages learners to participate in lessons, gain confidence and make progress.
- Teachers make clear links between topics and assessment criteria, and this prepares

learners well for assignments and examinations, particularly in GCSE English.

- Learners' attendance levels are high. Learners are keen to learn, attentive in class and respectful of staff and other learners. As a result, they work well together and are confident to talk about what they have learned.
- Teachers give learners valuable feedback on practical skills development that helps them to make good progress. They give constructive feedback on learners' assignment work that focuses on how learners can improve their work and how they can meet or exceed their targets.
- The large majority of learners participate in a comprehensive tutorial programme focused on work-related activity and 'learning to learn'. Learners value the support that they receive from their progress coaches that helps them to stay on course and succeed.
- Managers have increased significantly the opportunities for learners to participate in work experience relevant to their future careers. Just under half of current learners have already participated in good-quality and relevant work placements this year.
- Staff provide effective careers advice and guidance that support learners well so that they are confident about deciding their next steps. In most cases, this is through the valuable help and guidance from their progress coaches. As a result, nearly all learners progress onto positive destinations linked to their courses.
- In a minority of classroom-based lessons, teachers do not plan and deliver learning that takes sufficient account of learners' individual starting points. In these lessons, learners complete the same task at the same pace, and teachers do not challenge the most able to make progress in line with their ability. A small minority of teachers' feedback on theoretical work does not encourage learners to achieve the highest grades of which they are capable.
- The large majority of learners who retake GCSE mathematics qualifications do not achieve a high grade. Too many GCSE mathematics lessons are uninspiring, and teachers do not challenge learners sufficiently to improve. Not enough teachers on vocational courses ensure that learners make rapid enough progress in developing their English and mathematics skills.
- Teachers do not keep accurate records of the conversations that they have with learners about their progress or the personal targets that they set. This limits the effectiveness of the support that they provide to learners. For example, the actions of teachers to help a minority of learners improve their attendance have not been effective. A few teachers do not challenge learners if they arrive late, without the correct equipment or dressed inappropriately.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- The college currently has nearly 1,000 adult learners. Courses from entry level to level 4 meet learners' needs well. Leaders and managers have developed good partnerships with local stakeholders to ensure that adult learning programmes focus on meeting the needs of the most disadvantaged learners in the area. Courses include access to higher education, ESOL, and GCSE and functional skills English and mathematics.

- Learners on adult programmes are enthusiastic about their learning and keen to achieve their qualifications and progress further. They demonstrate good levels of motivation and understand well how their learning will benefit them in their future lives and careers.
- The large majority of teachers have high expectations of learners and monitor closely the progress that learners make. Teachers take swift and effective action to help learners catch up when they fall behind. As a result, the majority of current learners make good progress and are on target to achieve their qualifications.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan and deliver highly effective activities that help learners to develop new skills. As a result, learners gain confidence. For example, teachers help learners on access to higher education courses to develop their knowledge and understanding about different aspects of social policy and its impact on people's lives.
- Teachers provide learners with helpful feedback that makes clear to learners what they need to do to improve. Learners act on this and make improvements to their work and improve their grades.
- Learners value and benefit from the good-quality support that they receive from their teachers and progress coaches that helps them to achieve their qualifications. For example, teachers support learners on the access to higher education programme very well in writing personal statements and university applications. College staff provide learners with useful guidance and support with arranging childcare.
- Learners receive good advice and guidance from teachers and staff that help them to plan their next steps. Almost all learners know what they want to do next and the large majority move onto positive destinations such as further study or employment. In 2016/17, a high proportion of learners on the access to higher education programme progressed to their university of choice.
- Learners' behaviour is very good. Learners demonstrate the college's values of tolerance and mutual respect, and work well together in lessons. Learners feel safe and know which staff to talk to if they have any concerns.
- Learners on vocational programmes develop good practical skills and knowledge and many take advantage of well-planned work placements that help to prepare them for employment.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not take sufficient account of individual learners' starting points when planning and delivering learning. For example, not enough teachers prepare and use additional activities for learners who complete tasks quickly in lessons. As a result, a few of the most able learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Attendance is not yet high enough on adult learning programmes.
- A minority of learners do not have a good enough understanding of risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Apprenticeships

Outstanding

- There are 635 apprentices at the college, with 306 apprentices following intermediate-level programmes, 279 on advanced-level programmes and 50 on higher-level

programmes. The majority of apprentices follow programmes in health, public services and care, business administration, construction and retail and commercial enterprise.

- Managers have a clear vision for, and relentlessly pursue excellence in, the provision of apprenticeships. They have taken very effective action that has led to the proportion of apprentices completing their programme within the planned time improving dramatically in the last three years; it is now high. Current apprentices make excellent and sustained progress in learning from their starting points.
- Assessors are highly effective at providing support for apprentices who are not making the progress expected of them. They use progress reviews rigorously to confirm apprentices' progress and achievement and identify what apprentices need to do to improve. They work with employers to evaluate apprentices' progress and set targets. Apprentices understand their targets, complete work to a very high standard and make rapid progress.
- Managers have developed excellent partnerships with employers, and work with them well in the recruitment and selection of apprentices. The large majority of employers engage fully with managers at the college to provide apprentices with excellent on-the-job training. Employers make particularly valuable contributions to apprentices' progress reviews and off-the-job training.
- Leaders', managers' and assessors' flexible approach to apprenticeship provision meets employers' and apprentices' needs very well. Effective planning and investment have resulted in a very successful transition to the provision of apprenticeship standards in five occupational areas, with a further three planned in 2018.
- Apprentices develop very useful vocational skills and knowledge in the workplace that help them to perform particularly effectively in their roles. For example, apprentices in health and social care learn to deal with patients with dementia and how to use client-lifting gear safely and appropriately. Apprentices benefit from a number of individualised additional courses that support their career progression. As a result, the very large majority of apprentices develop skills beyond the minimum required for their programmes.
- Assessors plan and execute sessions very well and have productive, professional learning relationships with their apprentices. They use a range of good learning resources effectively. Staff are experienced in applying their vocational skills and knowledge. They take relevant opportunities to improve apprentices' English and mathematics skills in the context of the workplace. As a result, apprentices develop the English and mathematics skills which will benefit them in their careers.
- Apprentices develop valuable personal and employment skills that help them in their existing jobs, and will help them in their future careers. For example, they learn to communicate effectively by using business telephone procedures, and they develop their skills in working in a team and reporting to managers. Apprentices enjoy their learning and take pride in their work.
- Apprentices' attendance and behaviour are very good. Apprentices feel safe at work and in learning, demonstrate safe working practices, and are fully aware of whom to go to for assistance.
- Staff provide apprentices with very high-quality, impartial and realistic careers information. Consequently, the large majority of apprentices who achieve their

apprenticeship continue in employment with additional responsibility and promotion, or progress to higher-level programmes or self-employment.

- Apprentices have an appropriate understanding of British values and how to protect themselves from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- The college currently has 65 learners receiving high-needs funding. The majority of learners are taught in a discrete area, with the remainder either on vocational courses or the newly implemented supported internships. Learners are currently studying on a range of courses from entry to advanced level.
- Teachers have high aspirations of what learners with high needs can achieve. As a result, learners have a very high level of success in achieving their qualifications, with the vast majority moving onto positive destinations such as higher-level qualifications or supported internships.
- Learners gain confidence and improve the social interaction and communication skills that will support them well in their future lives. Support staff know their learners well and use specialist skills, such as signing, well to aid learners' understanding. Consequently, learners become more self-assured, confident to speak in small groups and to offer their opinions.
- Teachers ensure that learners become more independent as they progress through their course. For example, learners participate in a savings club that replicates a bank account. They learn how to budget and understand how this is a critical skill to support their independence.
- Learners benefit from effective careers guidance from staff and very good development of skills for employment. A very large proportion of learners access a good range of carefully planned external work placements in the community. As a result, they develop their interpersonal and job skills well. For example, learners benefit greatly from running their own cafe in the college. They learn how to stocktake, take orders, operate the till, and make and serve basic food and drinks to paying customers.
- Teachers support learners to develop their numeracy skills well and, wherever possible, they integrate the development of mathematics skills effectively into activities. For example, learners use tally charts to help them to remember orders in their cafe and use pie charts to assess their learning gaps and skills development needs.
- Teachers develop learners' vocabulary, technical language and literacy skills well. Learners make good progress with spelling and punctuation in their written work.
- The quality of teachers' feedback on learners' work is good. Teachers return work to learners quickly with comments that are constructive and highlight areas where learners can improve.
- The information and guidance that learners and their families receive at the start of their programme are good. The college works with a wide range of professionals and puts appropriate support in place quickly for new learners that is reviewed regularly throughout their course.
- Managers have worked hard with a range of external partners to introduce supported

internship programmes for learners from the start of this academic year. They recognise that some aspects of these programmes are still in development. It is too early to measure the impact these will have on sustained employment outcomes for learners.

- Teachers monitor the progress of learners on accredited programmes effectively. However, the recording of learners' progress for non-accredited learning is insufficiently precise and does not capture well enough the small, yet significant, steps that learners make in improving their personal skills.
- In a minority of cases, teachers set targets for learners that are too broad and do not review them frequently enough to be effective. As a result, a few learners do not make as much progress as they could with respect to important aspects of their personal and academic development.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130535
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	5,189
Principal/CEO	John Rees
Telephone number	01422 357357
Website	www.calderdale.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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	1,132	451	1,356	211	635	253	–	11
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	174	132	78	201	1	49		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	–		–		–			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	–							
Number of learners for whom the provider receives high-needs funding	65							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Project Challenge, Kirkdale Industrial Training Services SORA Services Ltd							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal for curriculum and 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

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