

Inspection of New College Bradford

Inspection dates: 19 to 22 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Education programmes for young people

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

New College Bradford is a 16 to 19 free school which opened in 2019 and is part of the New Collaborative Learning Trust. The college provides A-level and applied general and technical courses. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,538 students enrolled at the college. Of these, 473 were on A-level courses, 586 on applied general courses and 479 on mixed programmes.

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

Students benefit from a highly ambitious curriculum. They make rapid progress from their starting points in developing the knowledge and skills that they need to achieve at a high level. Teachers carefully design programmes to give students the specialist knowledge that they need for success, coupled with the skills to be independent and resourceful learners.

Students, many of whom are from areas of high social disadvantage and from families with no prior experience of university, are well prepared by teachers for progression to higher education. A very high proportion of students go on to university destinations, and most of the rest progress to high-level apprenticeships or employment. In a few subjects, the proportion of students who remain on their programme is below the high rate across most courses. Managers provide good support for students who decide that their course is not the right one for them, enabling most to transfer quickly and successfully to other courses, either at the college or elsewhere.

Students are highly respectful of each other, their staff and visitors. They respond very positively to the high expectations of attendance and behaviour that staff set. Students attend well, and the vast majority are punctual to classes. Behaviour, both inside and outside of classes, is exemplary. Students understand that negative behaviour has a wider impact on the college community and hinders them from focusing on their studies.

Students benefit from the availability of a broad range of high-quality and interesting activities that extend beyond the academic curriculum. Staff plan activities that provide students with the opportunity to develop their interests and skills, and broaden their horizons. Students studying on sports programmes speak positively about the opportunities to travel to Italy and Malta to develop football coaching experience. On health and social care courses, students participate in community projects in Thailand and Cambodia.

Students feel very safe in the college. Staff have fostered a calm, safe and inclusive environment where students can focus on learning. They develop students' understanding of the potential risks in their communities, such as gang culture, knife crime, child sexual exploitation and forced marriages. Students are very clear about how to report any concerns should they arise. They have considerable trust and confidence in staff to address any issues quickly.

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

Leaders and managers have a very strong focus on raising the aspirations of young people in the Bradford area. Their approach to developing teaching and learning draws on the latest academic research and results in high standards of teaching. Leaders and managers provide a thorough induction for teachers who are new to the college to make them fully familiar with their high expectations and the

approaches and strategies that ensure students experience consistently excellent tuition.

Teachers are experts in their fields, and many work with awarding bodies to maintain their subject expertise. Leaders and managers provide a comprehensive and highly effective professional development programme to enhance teachers' subject knowledge and practice. Experienced staff work very effectively with colleagues to provide coaching in specific priority areas identified by leaders and managers. They coach staff in strategies to extend the opportunities that students have to think deeply in lessons and help teachers to support students to develop their academic literacy in preparation for university. In the few instances where leaders and managers identify that the performance of teachers does not meet the college's high expectations, they put in place effective coaching and support to ensure that the performance of these teachers improves rapidly.

Managers and teachers consider very carefully the planning and sequencing of the curriculum. They ensure that students develop a secure understanding of the principles and theoretical concepts of their subjects. Early in the A-level chemistry programme, teachers deliver the principles of magnetic resonance, which is revisited later when studying organic compounds. In the independent work set for sociology students over the summer before they join the college, teachers introduce the curriculum by providing explanations about important theories. They reinforce students' understanding of these theories through returning to them frequently as students cover different curriculum topics during the course.

Students develop the ability to think critically about their subjects and the capacity to reflect on what they have learned. Teachers set frequent individual learning tasks to develop students' independence and reflection skills. They encourage students to identify gaps in their knowledge and set developmental goals and improvement plans. Chemistry students learn to use note-taking templates to gather information, summarise and record questions for retrieval later in their studies. Teachers effectively develop students' subject-specific vocabulary using word walls and glossary sheets. This develops an increasing understanding of specific subject terms, such as 'optically active' and 'optically inactive', when studying an organic chemistry topic.

Teachers plan frequent assessment points to check students' understanding of the subject topics. They effectively use a range of low-stakes tests such as quizzes, multiple choice questions, formal essays and mock examinations. Teachers use the outcomes of assessments very effectively to address misconceptions, repeat topics and provide individual support. Teachers of applied law move purposely around the classrooms to check understanding and answers as students complete written work. When they identify misconceptions, they provide further explanations to deepen students' knowledge. As a result, students demonstrate a secure understanding of their subject matter.

Leaders and managers have established highly effective arrangements for providing support to students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These students make progress in line with their peers.

Leaders and managers have in place rigorous processes to assure the quality of the provision. They carefully monitor the performance of students in each subject and, in the very few cases where they identify concerns, they quickly put in place effective improvement strategies. For example, they identified the need to provide additional mathematics support for A-level chemistry students who do not also study A-level mathematics, to help them achieve their potential in their examinations.

Staff provide high-quality careers, advice and guidance to enable students to have a clear understanding of the opportunities available to them, including apprenticeships. Students are able to visit universities, local businesses and careers fairs to help them decide their next steps. They develop an understanding of the world of work through high-quality work experience. Students studying a vocational business programme complete work experience in an international accountancy firm where they gain experience of working closely with clients and summarising professional documents.

Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. They have a collaborative approach to planning teaching and assessment which ensures consistency and effective management of individual workloads. Managers and teachers plan the curriculum to accommodate marking 'hot spots', and teachers have marking days allocated in their timetables. Leaders provide staff with appropriate time for professional development activities and to attend meetings. Staff who facilitate enrichment activities outside of the usual timetable can take time back in lieu. As a result, staff enjoy working at the college and value the measures that leaders and managers take to ensure their well-being.

Senior leaders are supported very well by an advisory group that provides a high level of scrutiny and challenge. Group members have relevant skills and expertise to carry out their roles very effectively. Leaders provide information to group members prior to meetings to allow them sufficient time to prepare questions and lines of enquiry, which ensures that the meetings are effective. The advisory group had oversight of attendance when it fell below their high expectations and, as a result of their scrutiny and challenge, attendance has significantly improved in the last academic year.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	143689
Address	Nelson Street Bradford BD5 0DX
Contact number	01274 089189
Website	https://ncbradford.ac.uk/
Principal	Stuart Nash
Provider type	16 to 19 free school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the 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

Joanne Stork, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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