

All the information in this booklet has been taken from the January 2008 Ofsted review.

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Ofsted report 2008

AWARDED OUTSTANDING



Awarded for excellence



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Blackburn College

Feilden Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 1LH

Student Services: 01254 29-29-29

E-mail: studentservices@blackburn.ac.uk

Tel: 01254 29-29-29
www.blackburn.ac.uk



"An *Outstanding* Choice



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AWARDED OUTSTANDING



“Working Together As A Team To Be Outstanding”

Blackburn College is a large general further education (GFE) College situated in the centre of Blackburn and provides education for around 4,000 learners aged 16-18.

The College has four Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in childhood studies, digital communications technology, textiles and fashion, and school support staff. It is also an Associate College of Lancaster University and degrees are awarded from a number of top universities including Lancaster University.

Blackburn College is currently undergoing a multi-million pound development plan of the campus. With the construction of a new Higher Education building due to begin in February 2008 with completion anticipated to be summer 2009.

Blackburn College aims to be a centre of excellence for demand led education, to be the provider of choice for employers and to work with learners and stakeholders to enhance employability and social cohesion.

Summary of Grades Awarded

Ofsted inspectors use a four-point grading scale to summarise their judgements in each category.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- Grade 1 – Outstanding
- Grade 2 – Good
- Grade 3 – Satisfactory
- Grade 4 – Inadequate

Blackburn College were awarded the following results in their inspection:

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity To Improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of Provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and Management	Outstanding: Grade 1
Equality of Opportunity	Outstanding: Grade 1

Capacity To Improve Outstanding: Grade 1

Ofsted highlighted the College’s Key Strengths as:

- Strong, supportive and empowering leadership and management
- Rigorous monitoring of performance and progress
- Improved and now high success rates
- Outstanding progress of GCE A Level students
- Very good teaching which challenges and meets learners needs
- Highly effective strategies to promote inclusion and widen participation
- Very productive external collaboration, partnerships and employer engagement
- Outstanding support for students
- Very successful arrangements to listen to and act on student views
- Robust and well informed governance.

“The College’s capacity to improve is outstanding.”

Staff receive wide-ranging professional development focused on achieving government priorities, meeting local area needs and improving teaching and learning.

The report recognised that Blackburn College has made outstanding progress in addressing the issues raised at the last inspection.

“Value added measurements show that the College is among the top 5% of all LSC funded providers.”

Arrangements to recruit and support students, and challenge them to make good progress are effective. The College considers and acts on the views of stakeholders.

The College management are continually striving to be an outstanding education provider and to achieve this they have invested in new buildings and significantly improved the quality of learning resources.



Leadership and Management Outstanding: Grade 1

“Leadership and management are outstanding.”

The College has achieved its challenging vision of “working as a team to be outstanding”. The principal, senior managers and governors provide very strong strategic direction and management for the College.

Staff at all levels feel empowered and trusted to do their jobs well and they respond admirably to the challenges they face.

“Governors are highly experienced and well informed.”

Governors contribute well to the formation of policy and decisions about the College’s strategic direction and monitor College performance, both academic and financial, carefully.

“Arrangements to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity are outstanding.”

The College management and promotion of both are high priority. Policies and procedures are clear. The College complies with government legislation and has appropriate arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults.

“The accommodation strategy is ambitious and well devised.”

Accommodation is good overall. New buildings, completed on time and to budget, are innovatory in their attention to environmental sustainability and provide excellent learning environments.

Curriculum management is outstanding and the management of work-based learning is good. Management arrangements are clear and effective in ensuring the centres respond appropriately to College priorities.

Management information is clear, accessible and timely and focused on key targets. Quality assurance arrangements are effective. They are clearly documented and understood by staff.

Effectiveness of provision Outstanding: Grade 1

“Achievement and standards are outstanding.”

Overall success, retention and achievement rates at Blackburn College have increased rapidly over the last three years. Success rates including those of most work-based learners are high. GCE A Level students make outstanding progress.

“Teaching and learning are outstanding.”

The overall quality of provision is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and matched to the needs of individual learners.



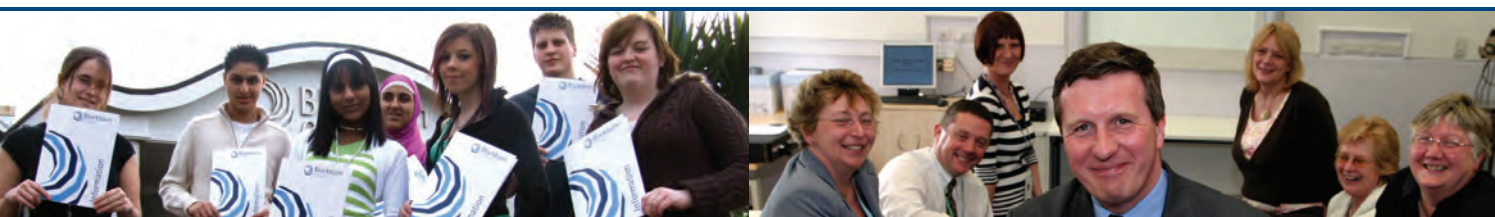
The College’s provision for meeting the needs and interests of learners, employers and the community is outstanding. Effective partnerships with external agencies have removed barriers to education and widened participation.

Employer engagement is outstanding. Varied enrichment activities enable students from diverse backgrounds and cultures to enhance their personal development.

Curriculum management is outstanding and the management of work-based learning is good. Service areas provide excellent support. Management information is clear, accessible and timely.

Close attention is given to the views of students and staff. Governors are highly experienced and well informed and monitor College academic performance carefully.

“Arrangements to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity are outstanding.”



Achievements and Standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. Overall success, retention and achievement rates increased rapidly over the last three years. Success rates are high and exceed the national averages for similar colleges for all key indicators.

"GCE A Level students make outstanding progress."

The College analyses success rates by gender and ethnicity. Indian and Pakistani learners continue to do well. The lowest performing group is white young people, however the College has identified the success rates of this group as an area for improvement.



Success rates for apprentices and other learners on work based learning courses such as Train to Gain and Entry to Employment (E2E) are high.

"Attendance of learners on courses increased significantly over last three years."

In the current year, attendance has increased to 91%. Retention is good and in 2007, 98% of learners who started their courses remained on courses in November.

"Learners are well motivated and enjoy their courses."

The standard of learners work is good and many produce work of a very high standard. The College celebrates learners' achievement widely, which motivates learners to succeed.

Quality of Provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

"The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding."

Managers use the results of the rigorous annual observations of teaching and learning in staff appraisal. Lecturers also benefit from sharing best practice and the support of teaching and learning advisers and subject coaches.

"Staff are empowered to make improvements that benefit learners and their morale is high."

Teaching is very good, provides challenges and meets learners' needs. Lecturers are well qualified, experienced and have current subject knowledge.

"The College's approach to social inclusion is outstanding."

Varied enrichment activities enable students from diverse backgrounds and cultures to enhance their personal development.

Effective partnerships with external agencies have removed barriers to education and widened participation.

"The College's provision for meeting the needs and interests of learners is outstanding."

Employer engagement is outstanding. The College works successfully with a wide range of employers. Both parents and employers are highly satisfied with the choice and quality of provision and the support available.

"The College's provision for the advice, guidance and support for learners is outstanding."

There is prompt implementation of additional learning support and regular monitoring ensures it meets changing needs.

There is full integration into the mainstream curriculum of students with complex learning difficulties. They receive very good specialist support which promotes and develops independent learning skills.

