

Burnley College

Princess Way, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 0AN

Unique reference number (URN): 130735

Monitoring inspection report:

22 and 23 April 2026

At the most recent full inspection, the following areas were identified as needing to improve:

- Strengthen the governing board with those with experience of the further education and skills sector
- Strengthen the systems and processes that leaders and governors use to ensure accurate qualification and achievement data are recorded and reported
- Provide consistently effective checks on learning to identify gaps in learners' and apprentices' knowledge and skills to inform teaching
- Provide high-quality developmental feedback so that learners and apprentices know precisely what they need to do to improve their work
- Improve the attendance for those learners who do not attend often enough

During the monitoring inspection, inspectors focused on the following themes:

- How much progress have leaders made in strengthening the governing board and ensuring board members have experience of the further education and skills sector?
- How much progress have leaders and governors made in using systems and processes to ensure accurate qualification and achievement data are recorded and reported?
- How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors provide consistently effective checks on learning to identify gaps in learners' and apprentices' knowledge and skills to inform teaching?
- How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors provide high-quality developmental feedback so that learners and apprentices know precisely what they need to do to improve their work?
- How much progress have leaders made in improving the attendance for those learners who do not attend often enough?

How much progress have leaders made in strengthening the governing board and ensuring board members have experience of the further education and skills sector? (Leadership and governance)

Following the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened governance arrangements. They have appointed a new governor with extensive expertise in further education and skills. This complements the knowledge already present among board members from schools, higher education, social enterprise, finance and legal sectors. Leaders have improved the quality of reporting to governors. Governors now receive clear, accurate and timely information. This enables stronger insight across sub-committees and the full board. As a result, governors have a well-informed oversight of the quality of provision.

Governors benefit from training on the college context and the wider further education and skills landscape. They use their knowledge, skills and experience effectively. Governors collaborate closely with leaders to ensure decisions are well informed. They provide robust support and challenge so leaders can continue to improve the learning experience for learners and apprentices.

Governors spend time in the college to understand it from the perspective of learners, apprentices and tutors, as well as from a strategic viewpoint. This enables them to develop an increasingly detailed and accurate insight into the provision.

How much progress have leaders and governors made in using systems and processes to ensure accurate qualification and achievement data are recorded and reported? (Leadership and governance)

Leaders have commissioned a series of comprehensive external audits of the college's individualised learner records. This level of detailed assurance is now a routine feature of the checking and monitoring cycle leaders have established to ensure data accuracy. Leaders have robust assurance processes in place, with qualification and achievement data recorded, validated and reported with precision.

Leaders have introduced new processes to manage learner transfers, withdrawals and amendments, ensuring these are completed correctly. They have provided training for all managers on the updated procedures to secure consistency and compliance. Leaders also sample and sign off all associated paperwork to verify accuracy, adherence to process and the impact of any changes.

Leaders have implemented a system to identify better those learners and apprentices at risk and to predict achievement outcomes. They model predicted achievements and use these to target actions effectively. Forecasts for the January examination series proved accurate, giving leaders confidence that their improved systems and interventions are having a positive effect.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors provide consistently effective checks on learning to identify gaps in learners' and apprentices' knowledge and skills to inform teaching? (Curriculum, teaching and training)

Leaders provide tutors with ongoing professional development so that they know how to make effective checks on learning and use this information to inform their teaching. Tutors make careful reference to prior learning and ensure learners have a secure understanding before they move on to a new topic. Tutors check learners' understanding effectively through worked examples, probing questions and use of mini whiteboards. They adapt lessons swiftly to address misconceptions. However, in a few cases, tutors do not use questioning well enough to assess the understanding of all learners.

Trainer assessors routinely check apprentices' knowledge and help them link their academic learning to the workplace. They use effective peer learning and use one-to-one sessions to identify gaps and plan targeted opportunities to address them.

Leaders have enhanced their quality assurance arrangements to check the quality of teaching. They have aligned their systems with the renewed education inspection framework and use effective processes such as performance reviews and learning walks to scrutinise curriculum, teaching and training. Leaders use the findings from these activities to provide targeted professional development and weekly training sessions, which allow tutors to share effective practice. Professional learning is evidence-informed and supported by the college's inclusion strategy. Leaders have created a positive culture of professional learning and development.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors provide high-quality developmental feedback so that learners and apprentices know precisely what they need to do to improve their work? (Curriculum, teaching and training)

Tutors provide learners with clear, purposeful feedback that helps them to improve their work and make sustained progress. In level 3 sport science, tutors teach learners how to move beyond simple description by modelling analysis and application in lessons. A-level tutors point out the specific omissions that cost learners marks and keep a strong emphasis on study skills, revision strategies and targeted support sessions so learners can close gaps quickly. On the T level in education and early years, tutors highlight what learners do well and explain clearly what would make their work even better. Learners strengthen their written work, presentations and application of child development theory. They reflect thoughtfully on their practice, improve the standard of their work and make positive contributions to their early years settings.

Apprentices act on feedback and improve the quality of their work. On the chartered manager degree apprenticeship, apprentices produce high-quality projects such as company branding and website redesign. Trainer assessors give immediate, relevant guidance, and their marking makes strengths and next steps clear. Trainer assessors review apprentices' work-based learning and give developmental feedback that helps apprentices to continue to refine their performance even when they already meet the standard.

How much progress have leaders made in improving the attendance for those learners who do not attend often enough? (Participation and development)

Leaders have high expectations for learners' and apprentices' attendance. They work collaboratively with local schools to gather detailed information about learners, including those who are disadvantaged, face barriers to learning, or have low attendance. The safeguarding and wellbeing team work with these learners before they enrol to ensure they are ready to make a successful transition to the college.

Leaders have clear processes in place for reporting and following up absences. If learners struggle to attend, leaders swiftly intervene to ensure learners' barriers are understood and their needs met. Leaders hold retention surgeries every two weeks to review learners identified as at risk, enabling timely action and coordinated support. The impact of interventions for those with low attendance is monitored closely and has a positive impact on learners. Tutors know their learners very well, and if they miss lessons, they have clear plans to catch them up.

Leaders recognise that ensuring learners have consistently high attendance is a challenge, particularly given the significant proportion of learners who are disadvantaged or have barriers to learning. Leaders champion a culture of inclusion and support to ensure learners remain in learning and achieve their qualifications.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to work to address the areas identified as needing improvement in the full inspection report.

About this inspection

This is the first monitoring inspection following publication of the inspection report on 3 July 2025 which found the provider to be requires improvement overall.

The provider's previous full inspection was carried out under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) at that time. The renewed EIF took effect from 10 November 2025. The areas for improvement identified at the provider's full inspection and subsequent

monitoring inspection have been cross-referenced to relevant evaluation areas in the inspection toolkit for consideration on this monitoring inspection.

The purpose of this monitoring inspection was not to determine grades for any of the evaluation areas set out in the further education and skills inspection toolkit. The purpose was to identify and report on the provider's progress in addressing the areas identified as needing to improve since the provider's previous inspection.

Burnley College appointed a new principal and chief executive in February 2026.

Lead inspector

Helen Whelan

His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector

Alastair Mollon

His Majesty's Inspector

About this provider

Number of learners on education programmes for young people at time of inspection	4437
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Number of learners on adult learning programmes at time of inspection	1097
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Number of apprentices at time of inspection	928
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Number of learners receiving high-needs funding at time of inspection	132
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