

YMCA Derbyshire

Focused monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Victor Shafiee HMI

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Type of provider: Voluntary organisation

Address: 770 London Road
Alvaston
Derby
DE24 8UT

Telephone number: 01332 579550

FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Derbyshire is a registered charity. The company contracts with the Young People's Funding Agency to provide Foundation Learning (FL) programmes for 16 to 18 year olds. Learners are working towards qualifications in early years and playwork, health and social care, retailing and wholesaling, hospitality and catering, as well as literacy and numeracy.

Since the previous inspection, the number of learners has increased from 20 to 39 of whom eight learners are on FL programmes and 31 learners have transferred from the Entry to Employment programme (ETE) onto the FL programme. Over the past two years, the company has made significant capital investment in improving its centres. The company has two training centres in Derby including a new purpose built training centre as well as training centres in Chesterfield, Alfreton, and Ilkeston.

The company was inspected in November 2008, when all areas were judged to be satisfactory. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has YMCA Derbyshire made in improving the effectiveness of the self-assessment process to bring about improvements?	Reasonable progress
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Since the last inspection self-assessment has improved and is now more focused on improving outcomes for learners. Managers use the outcomes of the quality improvement arrangements well to produce appropriate action plans. YMCA Derbyshire now makes good use of learner surveys to identify areas for development. The involvement of staff in self-assessment has improved and is now effective. Staff make good use of the Common Inspection Framework to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes. However, the evaluations are not always sufficiently critical. The self-assessment report is evaluative. However, the 2008/09 report did not clearly identify the declining trend in learner progress. Senior managers have well developed plans in place to strengthen further the use of data.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has YMCA Derbyshire made in improving the outcomes for learners?	Insufficient progress
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Since the last inspection, outcomes for learners have not improved sufficiently over time. The achievement of literacy and numeracy qualifications is now high. In 2009/10, 94% achieved appropriate literacy and numeracy qualification in communication and application of numbers. However, the achievement rate for the

Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education was high, but has declined and is now satisfactory. In 2008/09 63% of learners successfully completed their qualification, this is 26 percentage points lower than in 2007/08. The rate of learners progressing into employment, training or further education has declined and is now low. In 2008/09, 40% of learners progressed into employment, training or further education. YMCA Derbyshire is aware of this area for improvement and has well-developed plans in place to deal with this declining trend.

Learners continue to acquire a good range of personal and social skills. They quickly increase their self-confidence and are able to work collaboratively with their peers. Training centres provide a welcoming environment and learners report that they feel safe. A high proportion of learners achieve useful additional qualifications. For example in 2008/09, 78% of learners completed a first aid programme.

Quality of Provision

What progress has YMCA Derbyshire made in improving provision to identify and meet the literacy and numeracy development needs of learners?

Significant progress

Since the previous inspection, YMCA Derbyshire has taken very effective actions to improve its literacy and numeracy provision. Managers have placed a high priority on improving learners' key skills success rates. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy level is satisfactory and staff have a good understanding of learners' individual needs. A significant proportion of learners receive effective individual support to achieve literacy and numeracy qualifications. Learners value the additional support they receive from their tutors. All learners have access to literacy and numeracy qualifications at an appropriate level. The provider has well developed plans to introduce an appropriate diagnostic assessment to strengthen the identification of learners' literacy and numeracy needs. The provider now has a clear and well-implemented strategy for the introduction of relevant functional skills. Staff have worked well to integrate Functional Skills into learners' programmes. Whilst YMCA Derbyshire has an effective understanding of individual learner's progress it does not routinely analyse the achievement of learners receiving additional learning support compared to other learners.

What progress has YMCA Derbyshire made in improving the effectiveness of target setting and learning plans?

Reasonable progress

Individual action planning and target setting for learners have improved and are now satisfactory. Learners have clear action plans. Staff have received appropriate training to enhance their skills in target setting and action planning. Staff help learners well to agree and set sufficiently challenging targets and appropriately monitor learners' key objectives. Learners are effectively encouraged to record their learning, personal development and future career objectives. Most targets are specific, measurable and time bound, however a few lack time-constrained

milestones. Learners have a sufficient understanding of their own targets and know what they need to do to improve. Since the previous inspection, YMCA Derbyshire has introduced appropriate documentation to improve the planning and monitoring of learners' progress. Learners find the documentation helpful. However, the management information system does not provide managers with up to date information regarding the frequency and the timeliness of learners' progress reviews.

How much progress has YMCA Derbyshire made in improving the availability of work placements for learners? **Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, YMCA Derbyshire has developed an appropriate range of work placements. The vocational focus of courses is well matched and responsive to the interest of learners and local labour market circumstances. Work placements provide learners with adequate opportunities to develop their vocational skills. Learners report that the placements are relevant and interesting. Communication between YMCA Derbyshire and work placement providers are good. Employers' involvement with the programme is satisfactory. Staff work well with an appropriate range of employers that offer work placements to learners. These range from small charities and local businesses to local public sector organisations. However, the provider recognises the need to expand further its employer network to better reflect local employment opportunities and enhance the choice of placements within the private sector particularly for the retail learners.

Leadership and management

What progress has YMCA Derbyshire made in improving the effectiveness of quality improvement arrangements? **Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection quality assurance arrangements were underdeveloped. YMCA Derbyshire has tackled all the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection. There is now a strong culture of quality improvement. The quality improvement arrangements are now comprehensive and cover all relevant aspects. These include observations of induction, teaching and learning and progress reviews and checks on individual learning plans, assessment practice and programme reviews. YMCA Derbyshire has now produced a clear calendar that identifies how frequently the quality assurance activities should take place. Quality improvement action plans show how the development of provision for learners will take place. However, it is too soon to judge the full impact of these actions. Quality improvement arrangements take full account of learner feedback. All staff respond swiftly to feedback from learners and work well with them to resolve their concerns. At the previous inspection, the observation of teaching and learning was not sufficiently effective. The observation of teaching and learning has improved and is now effective. All staff are observed and graded twice each year, and there is a useful programme of peer observations. Senior managers review the feedback from observations and plan useful professional development activities to improve teaching and learning.

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
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