

Derby Skillbuild

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		17–19 March 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- learners develop good personal, social and employability skills through participation in high-quality vocational training sessions and well-chosen work placements
- most learners gain the qualifications they are studying and a high proportion progress to further training or employment after leaving the programme
- staff provide good personal support for learners to help them overcome barriers to learning
- learners develop good practical skills in hairdressing, construction and creative media
- tutors provide good individual coaching in lessons
- the well-managed vocational curriculum meets learners' differing needs and encourages attendance
- close links with local employers and community projects ensure that programmes meet local needs to the benefit of both employers and learners
- regular monitoring of the highly effective health and safety arrangements protect learners well
- very supportive and involved directors provide specialist support and guidance to the organisation.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- the provision of functional skills does not provide learners with sufficient variety and challenge
- tutors do not routinely mark written work or always give feedback
- managers do not monitor learners' progress sufficiently well
- assessors do not reinforce equality and diversity or safeguarding sufficiently during learners' progress reviews
- the subcontractor agreement does not contain enough detail on how directors and managers oversee the agreement to ensure learners receive the best provision
- managers do not share the quality improvement plan (QIP) with all staff or use it as a working document.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure tutors recognise the different levels of learners' ability and use this information to provide additional individualised support and more challenging practical learning activities, particularly within functional skills sessions. Encourage tutors to give individual feedback on learners' written work to encourage them to work with more care and accuracy.
- Managers should provide equality and diversity training for staff so that they are up-to-date with recent legislation and can confidently discuss topics during learners' progress reviews; summarise these discussions in review records so that managers can monitor the effectiveness of this improvement initiative.
- Managers should review and update the QIP more regularly and focus on completing the identified actions on time. Share the QIP with staff, so that they understand their responsibility for improving the quality of provision for learners. Convert key performance indicators from the three-year strategic plan to yearly indicators so directors and managers can monitor annual measurable objectives.
- Ensure managers and tutors have current information on learners' progress that allows them to take quick and effective action where performance shortfalls are identified.
- Introduce a subcontractor agreement that clearly identifies measures to quality assure the learners' experience. Ensure managers routinely receive performance data on learners in subcontracted provision so they can monitor more closely their performance.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Derby Skillbuild provides study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19. Around half of the learners attend the organisations' training centre for construction, creative media and employability training. The others attend the subcontractor for training in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Most learners have not previously achieved any qualifications and many have been disengaged from education. They have significant personal difficulties and barriers to learning.
- Learners' success rates in most qualifications are high. In particular, success rates in functional skills English and mathematics qualifications at Entry level and level 1 are high. However, for the small number of learners who undertake these awards at level 2, and in creative media, success rates are low. Where learners remain on their programme, the majority succeed in achieving their intended qualifications.
- Learners improve their self-esteem and develop very good personal skills that they can apply in the workplace. For example, a learner with low personal confidence following years of bullying at school developed an ability to make eye contact with, and speak confidently to, clients in the hairdressing salon and has successfully progressed from the study programme to an apprenticeship.
- Highly relevant work placements, planned from the outset, allow learners to attend when they are ready to do so and enable them to develop further their personal and work related skills. In hairdressing, learners are involved well in finding work placements of their choice, by visiting salons and distributing their curriculum vitae. Learners in construction benefit from working on commercial sites alongside skilled operatives. The bricklaying and painting and decorating skills the learners display are highly valued by their work experience hosts.

- Managers have good links with other training providers and local employers and use these effectively to help learners progress. The proportion of learners who move to further training or employment upon leaving the study programme is high. Of the leavers so far in 2014/15, over two thirds have progressed into further training or a job. Managers monitor data on the performance of different groups of learners well and no achievement gaps exist.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflecting the high level of progress learners make and their good achievements. Tutors have high expectations of learners including their behaviour, attendance and participation in lessons and learners therefore work hard and very enthusiastically. Small class sizes enable tutors to provide good individual coaching in lessons, so that each learner gets the help they need promptly and very effectively. Tutors know their learners very well, including their abilities and personal circumstances, and use this information very effectively to help them learn.
- Caring staff provide particularly strong support that ensures learners remain on their programme. Where appropriate, Derby Skillbuild involves parents and other agencies well in discussions around problems affecting learning and in agreeing a way forward. Tutors challenge learners appropriately and promote a high standard of attitudes and behaviours appropriate to the workplace. They encourage a positive culture of mutual respect and sensitivity to the needs of others that aids learners' progress.
- Learners develop very good knowledge and skills in hairdressing, construction and creative media. They enjoy learning, particularly in practical sessions where they are thoroughly involved in tasks such as blow-drying hair, building walls or creating complex digital images. Tutors' skills, motivation and enthusiasm inspire learners to do their best. Tutors skilfully weave English and mathematics learning into practical sessions. In hairdressing, learners' demonstrate a good knowledge of how to cater for a wide range of clients, including those with disabilities or health conditions such as alopecia. Tutors integrate equality and diversity themes well into training sessions.
- Tutors use the varied learning resources well to support learners' development. Learners benefit from training on a large rural site that includes space for gardening and construction projects including greenhouses and workshops. In classrooms, tutors use laptop computers very effectively to encourage learners to undertake independent research and use online learning packages. Learners also use specialist computer software for creative media. Tutors produce a high standard of attractive and colourful handouts and assignments. The hairdressing subcontractor has recently moved to well-equipped, centrally located premises that attract a wide range of clients for learners to work with. However, temperature and ventilation control in the classrooms at Derby Skillbuild training centre are not sufficiently effective and learners spend too long in these classrooms on a daily basis, which impedes their learning.
- Tutors identify learners' starting points well, using interviews and assessments to determine their prior knowledge, skills and support needs. Learning plans, effectively tailored to the learners' requirements such as attendance and support needs, record well their development. Information, advice and guidance are highly effective in ensuring that staff prepare learners well for their study programme and future progression options.
- Tutors assess learners thoroughly through use of observation, well-focused oral questions and clear written assignments. While verbal feedback to learners on their written work is encouraging and clear, written feedback requires improvement. Tutors do not mark a minority of written work at all; in other work, they do not always identify and correct punctuation and spelling errors.

- Planning for functional skills requires improvement. Learners attend classes in functional skills for a whole day and the teaching strategies used do not always ensure they are fully engaged in learning during all the taught sessions. In a minority of functional skills lessons, tutors do not sufficiently challenge the more able learners, who spend time on tasks that they find too easy. In these instances, the tasks tutors set do not link closely to the learning needs identified at initial assessment and insufficient learning takes place.
- Tutors review each element of the study programme separately and set learners appropriate, specific and challenging targets. However, they do not review learners' progress as a whole. As a result, learners are not always clear on how much of their individual learning plan they have completed. In a minority of lessons, such as employability, tutors promote equality and diversity well. However, at progress review meetings, staff do not always check or reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity or safeguarding. The manual tracking of individual learners' progress through display boards is adequate, but no effective system is in place for managers to assess and oversee the overall position of learners' progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, directors and the general manager have greatly improved strategic management. They have set clear and ambitious targets, increased the range of training programmes and improved learners' performance. A well-planned reorganisation of the board of directors has improved the board's expertise to support the organisation. Clearly focused strategies on improving access include becoming a key local provider of alternative education and qualifications to level 2. Directors and managers' clear focus on improving teaching and learning and management information has greatly raised performance and enthusiasm across the organisation. However, the strategic plan is not broken down into clearly measurable annual objectives that are shared with all staff.
- A particularly relevant curriculum meets the needs of the different groups of learners, many of whom are challenging to help, due to a range of personal issues. Managers meet regularly with local community development groups and through the local provider network have representation on the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The curriculum is tailored well to take account of the varying requirements of individual learners. Their staff ensure the high-standard study programmes meet individual learner's needs well and move learners to employment through well-planned work placements with good local job opportunities.
- Teaching and learning, and the development of tutors' skills have improved significantly since the last inspection. Observations of teaching are well planned and carried out. The outcomes of teaching observations are used particularly well to inform the development and support activities of tutors who undertake a range of well-recorded professional development. Managers link tutors' performance very effectively to the organisation's process to manage staff performance. Appropriate arrangements are in place for developmental joint teaching observations with the subcontractor to secure improvement
- A recently introduced and effective system underpins the quality assurance and improvement processes. A range of performance monitoring activities takes place during the learners' time at the provider. This includes well-recorded teaching observations, quality assurance of learners' assessments, progress reviews and portfolios, and the sharing of good practice. Monitoring of subcontracted provision through monthly reviews and joint observations of teaching is very effective. Regular sharing of good practice with the subcontractor takes place. However, not all activities and expectations are formalised in the subcontractor agreement, particularly around the provision of regular data on learners' performance.
- Self-assessment has improved since the last inspection and it evaluates the provision well. The process is inclusive, and includes self-assessment staff workshops, attended by directors. The

directors are fully involved in the process and sign off the final version. Learners' views help form judgements and the learners' forum is instrumental in many improvements. However, directors, managers and staff do not fully use the quality improvement plan to drive improvement. Managers do not monitor well the impact of the plan's actions.

- Since the last inspection, the management of data has much improved. Managers make good use of data to improve and build the provision. They produce and share well a range of carefully analysed reports and summaries with staff and quickly identify and address any underperformance or concerns. The data they collect allows managers to interpret the performance of different groups of learners particularly effectively.
- Staff promote equality and diversity well both in the classroom and around the training centre. Learners are from diverse backgrounds and in a minority of cases have severe personal problems that require the respect and acceptance promoted within Derby Skillbuild. Through work with local schools and community groups, efforts to widen participation have resulted in the recruiting of learners from varying backgrounds with examples of the removal of gender stereotyping, particularly in construction and hairdressing, where there is a good mix of males and females on both programmes. Although staff integrate equality and diversity well in all aspects of the training programmes, they have not received any recent formal awareness raising or training.
- The provider's safeguarding of learners is good. All staff have recently received training in safeguarding at levels 1 and 2. Managers update disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks regularly and the designated safeguarding officer links with the local safeguarding children board and takes advantage of training and updating opportunities. All staff are particularly aware of the importance of safeguarding the vulnerable learner groups with which they work. Managers and staff have shared good safeguarding practice by the subcontractor, which the subcontractor manages well on its premises. Managers and staff from Derby Skillbuild and the subcontractor monitor health and safety very well. Tutors cover units on health and safety in all programme areas and construction learners study for the site safety card that acknowledges they have received training to work safely during their work placement.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Derby Skillbuild

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2			2					
Outcomes for learners	2			2					
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2			2					
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2			2					

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Employability training	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	65							
Principal/CEO	Dianne Brocklehurst							
Date of previous inspection	22 October 2013							
Website address	www.derbyskillbuild.org.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 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	36	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	36							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Academy of Hair and Beauty (Derby) 							

Contextual information

Located within the Osmaston area, Derby Skillbuild is a charitable limited company. Seven board directors oversee the running of the organisation with day-to-day operations being the responsibility of the General Manager. The organisation employs four full-time and one part-time tutor and has a business administration apprentice. A subcontractor, based in Derby, provides hairdressing and beauty therapy training. Learners mainly reside in the Osmaston area, which has high levels of social deprivation. In addition to providing study programmes, the organisation also provides alternative provision for school students.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Tim Hanson AI
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Two additional inspectors, assisted by the General Manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area listed in the report.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012

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