

Short inspection of DCG

Inspection dates:

3–4 December 2019

Outcome

DCG continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

DCG is a large general further education college. It has four main sites: The Roundhouse and The Joseph Wright Campus in Derby, Ilkeston Campus in Ilkeston and Broomfield Hall, which lies between the two. It provides education and training for over 4,500 young people, almost 6,000 adults and around 2,000 apprentices. Around 300 students have high needs. The college subcontracts a small amount of its training, mostly apprenticeships, to other providers.

The college provides courses and apprenticeships across the whole range of subject areas, from entry level through to higher education. These programmes include courses in agriculture, horticulture and animal care, and a large national retail programme for adults who wish to return to employment following extended periods out of the workforce. The college's previous inspection was in March 2016.

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

Students enjoy attending college. They feel safe and welcome. They value the good standard of accommodation and resources. Young learners feel respected and valued by teachers and other staff.

Adult learners, many of whom are from the most disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups, benefit from inclusive and highly personalised programmes. They gain confidence from their work experience and study. For many, their experiences are life-changing and open opportunities for them to return to employment.

Most students and apprentices experience very good teaching and support. They develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare them well for further study or employment. The excellent links that staff have with local employers and higher education providers mean that students gain good exposure to the workplace.

Because they feel valued and respected, and they value the resources available to them, students and apprentices behave well, and show respect to one another and to college staff.

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

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and apprentices. They have worked with staff to turn these aspirations into concrete curricular plans. Together with governors, they have created a positive culture at the college in which staff, students and apprentices are proud to work and study.

Managers and staff work closely with employers and higher education providers to identify the skills, knowledge and behaviours that students and apprentices need. This helps to ensure that programmes prepare young people, adults and apprentices well for their futures.

Teachers, trainers and assessors plan their teaching carefully. They consider the most effective order in which to present information to students and apprentices, how they can make links between different topics, and how students and apprentices will practise what they have learned. For example, animal care staff plan courses together so that students learn about animal health and nutrition in one part of the course before they apply this to practical work in another unit.

Teachers, trainers and assessors have good subject knowledge and explain concepts clearly to students. This helps students to develop a detailed understanding of often complex topics that they are then able to apply to practical tasks.

Staff use a range of effective techniques to check students' and apprentices' understanding within lessons and to identify any misconceptions they hold. This enables them to adapt their teaching to focus on the areas that learners find most difficult. However, teachers do not always check the quality of notes that students make, missing an opportunity to quickly identify and correct misunderstandings.

The extent to which staff provide useful feedback on students' and apprentices' written work varies considerably. In sports subjects, inspectors saw examples of precise feedback with clear guidance on what students should do to improve. However, feedback to construction apprentices was not specific enough to be useful.

Teachers provide good opportunities for students and apprentices to revisit and consolidate what they have learned. In lessons about wildlife rehabilitation, for example, teachers frequently test students' recall of topics from earlier lessons. As a result, students can readily identify a wide range of wild animals and can describe their habitats and their predators.

A few teachers do not use lesson time effectively enough. They spend too much time on activities that do not contribute sufficiently to learning. For example, they ask students to discuss questions about which they have little knowledge, before telling them the answers. Although students learn the material, they do so slowly.

Most students and apprentices progress to and sustain further study or employment

as a result of their studies. They grow in confidence, which is particularly important for adult learners on retail programmes, many of whom are returning to learning after significant personal difficulties.

The majority of students remain on their courses and pass their qualifications. However, level 3 students, particularly those who take A levels, do not always achieve the grades of which they are capable. Managers have taken a range of actions to improve this, including making staffing changes, but the impact of these actions is not yet evident.

Staff provide careers guidance that is tailored to the individual needs of students and apprentices. Most receive good advice, and have good contact with employers, often through work placements and work-related activities. As a result, they are able to make informed choices about their next steps.

Leaders, managers and staff have not ensured that students' attendance is consistently good. They are aware of the need for improvements and have taken a range of actions, but the impact of these actions has been limited.

Leaders and managers invest in high-quality continuing professional development, including research into educational effectiveness, that supports teachers to improve their professional practice. This has led to improvements across many areas of the college. However, there remain a few subjects in which this training has not yet had enough impact, such as A levels and engineering provision.

Governors are highly qualified and experienced. They know the college well. They receive and scrutinise regular and detailed performance reports. Governors hold senior leaders to account and challenge effectively any areas of underperformance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and reflect best practice. Safeguarding leads, staff and governors receive training to enable them to apply these policies and procedures. Managers check the backgrounds of staff before employing them to ensure their suitability to work with students. Safeguarding leads record and monitor reported incidents effectively. They have good relationships with external agencies that they use to support students where necessary.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should work with staff who teach in underperforming areas, especially A levels, to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum so that students achieve the grades they are capable of.
- Leaders and managers should work with teachers to ensure that they are able to

identify lesson activities that are unlikely to contribute effectively to learning and replace them with activities that make better use of lesson time.

- Leaders and managers should work with teachers, trainers and assessors to establish clear expectations in relation to the feedback that staff provide on students' and apprentices' written work.
- Leaders and managers should work with staff to improve their responses to students whose attendance is too low, so that they take effective action to help these students to attend more frequently and encourage other students to maintain their high levels of attendance.

Provider details

Unique reference number 133585

Address The Roundhouse
Roundhouse Road
Pride Park
Derby
Derbyshire
DE24 8JE

Contact number 01332 520200

Website www.derby-college.ac.uk

Principal/CEO Mandie Stravino

Provider type General further education college

Date of previous inspection 1–4 March 2016

Main subcontractors Breedon House Nurseries Limited
Burton Training Organisation Limited
SM Hair Salons Limited
Chameleon School of Construction Limited
Lifelong Opportunities Limited
The Construction Skills People Limited
The Skills Centre London Limited
The White Rose School of Beauty and
Complementary Therapies Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since DCG was judged to be good in March 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the Director of Quality and Compliance, 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 observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Russ Henry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Emma Woods	Her Majesty's Inspector
Karen Green	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Deary	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Whelan	Her Majesty's Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019