

# Short inspection of Reaseheath College

Inspection dates:

4–5 December 2019

## **Outcome**

Reaseheath College continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

Reaseheath College is a specialist land-based provider located about six miles from the town of Crewe. It offers full- and part-time courses from entry level to degree level and apprenticeships in all land-based subjects and in sport, business, motor vehicle and construction. It offers specialist provision in food processing and agricultural engineering, developed in conjunction with industry partners. The college offers courses for students aged 16 to 18, adult learners, apprentices and for students with high needs. About 1900 students aged 16 to 18, 360 adult students, 550 apprentices and 130 students with high needs study at the college.

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

Students and apprentices develop very good practical skills as they learn in very high-quality practical facilities. They are taught by ambitious and enthusiastic teachers and instructors who have extensive experience of their industries and subjects.

Students and apprentices enjoy their time at college. They value the support they receive from teachers, assessors and technicians highly. Several comment that they think their time at college has been 'a great experience for what industry will be like' and 'the staff are amazing'.

Students with high needs overcome often complex challenges to become more independent due to the support they receive from staff at college. They improve their social and communication skills and make friends as a result of the inclusive, friendly and welcoming environment staff have created at college.

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

Leaders and managers have continued to develop and exploit their excellent links with regional, national and international businesses. This ensures that students and apprentices have access to very high-quality and up-to-date equipment for their studies. For example, agricultural machinery manufacturers loan the college specialist equipment when students are learning about a specific topic, such as global positioning systems.

Governors use their wide range of skills, which includes experience of further education, higher education, finance and land-based industries, very effectively to support and challenge senior leaders. They use their committee structure conscientiously in order to oversee the different aspects of the college's operation. They have a thorough understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision. They monitor the progress leaders and managers are making in improving the weaker aspects of the curriculum, while maintaining an accurate oversight of the stronger aspects.

As a result of teachers' and instructors' extensive industry experience, they expect very high standards from their students and apprentices. Students and apprentices achieve these standards consistently and develop excellent behaviours and attitudes to learning and work.

Teachers and instructors plan learning programmes with care. They ensure that what they teach and when they teach it helps students and apprentices to master more complex skills and knowledge over time. Frequently, teachers and trainers help students and apprentices develop more complex skills and knowledge than their qualification requires. This prepares them extremely well for employment because employers value the additional skills and knowledge that students and apprentices bring with them from college. For example, agricultural engineers learn to strip

down and rebuild four stroke engines. This is more than their qualification requires, but it helps them to understand how these engines work and how to diagnose faults.

Students and apprentices learn to work safely with animals, machinery, hand tools and chemicals due to the very clear emphasis that leaders and managers place on safe working. This permeates the work of the college and helps to ensure that very few accidents occur and students and apprentices work diligently.

Students and apprentices produce written work to a high standard that meets or exceeds the standard of their qualification and industry expectations. Teachers and assessors give students and apprentices constructive and developmental feedback on their work, which helps them improve. Students and apprentices use technical and vocational language confidently and accurately in their written work and during lessons.

Apprentices, particularly those studying agricultural engineering and food-related subjects, make excellent progress because teachers and trainers use a range of relevant and motivating teaching methods. They study in well-equipped practical facilities which emulate those found in industry. Their training at college helps them understand better what they are doing at work and why they are doing it. Dairy processing apprentices commented that the training they had received at college had helped them to understand much better the science behind what they were doing at work. Other apprentices were able to explain improvements they had suggested and implemented at work from what they had learned at college.

A very high proportion of students and apprentices get jobs or move on to higher levels of training or learning. They receive very high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance from both specialist careers guidance staff and from their industry-experienced teachers and assessors.

Although students with high needs make good progress with their social and communication skills, and develop greater independence at college, they do not always achieve their full academic potential. Teachers are not sufficiently skilled in developing more ambitious and complex learning goals for skills such as English, mathematics or employment from the targets in students' education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Teachers and assessors have been less successful at preparing their students and apprentices for the externally examined parts of their qualifications. As a result, a small minority of students and apprentices have not gained the qualifications they attended college to achieve. This has reduced their career options at the end of their course or, where possible, led them to resit examinations. Leaders and managers had identified this weakness previously and are helping teachers and assessors to gain the relevant teaching skills to ensure that a larger proportion of students and apprentices pass their examinations at the first attempt.

In a few subjects, such as construction and engineering, managers have not had

adequate oversight of the apprenticeship provision. A few apprentices have not had sufficient training, reviews of their progress or had training at college which links to their training or job role at work. This has led to a small proportion of apprentices not achieving their qualification within the planned timescale or leaving the course early.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take very good care of students and apprentices at the college. They are well trained in safeguarding, which they use assiduously to identify students and apprentices who may need help to overcome challenges in their lives. Staff responsible for safeguarding have developed excellent and productive links to external agencies, such as those for children's services and mental health support, to make sure students and apprentices get the help they need.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- The skills of teachers and assessors to help prepare students and apprentices for the externally examined or assessed part of their qualification so that more of them are successful.
- The management of apprenticeship provision so that a higher proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications and get jobs in the industries for which they have trained.
- The complexity and ambition of high-needs students' learning goals for English, mathematics and employment, based on their EHC plan goals and targets.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130623
<b>Address</b>	Reaseheath Nantwich Cheshire CW5 6DF
<b>Contact number</b>	01270 625 131
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.reaseheath.ac.uk">www.reaseheath.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Marcus Clinton
<b>Provider type</b>	Specialist land-based college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4–5 November 2015
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since Reaseheath College was judged to be good in February 2010.

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant principal for quality, 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

Richard Pemble, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Suzanne Wainwright	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Humphreys	Her Majesty's Inspector
Emma Barrett-Peel	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jackie Shopland-Reed	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Ingle	Ofsted Inspector

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