

Derby Skillbuild

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Entry to Employment (E2E)

Description of the provider

1. Derby Skillbuild contracts with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council to provide Entry to Employment (E2E) training for up to 25 learners per week. The company is a registered charity and is overseen by a management committee of five people who are responsible for the effective operation of the company. The company employs three full-time teaching staff and a project manager. Derby Skillbuild has held a contract to run E2E courses from October 2005. The company's E2E provision has not been inspected before.
2. Derby Skillbuild is located on a 12 acre site that is leased from the local council in a part of Derby with high levels of social deprivation, crime and unemployment. There are currently 22 learners on the E2E programme, divided into two groups. One group attends Monday to midday on Wednesday each week and the other group attends for the remaining part of the week. There is one female learner, one learner who is hearing impaired and three from Black Caribbean backgrounds. The remainder of the learners are White British males. The Derby Connexions Service provides each learner with a personal adviser and refers learners onto the course. Learners can join the E2E course at any time during the year. Learners work on various work taster projects such as horticulture, landscaping, joinery, bricklaying and painting, gaining basic work skills in these areas. Additional short courses are available leading to recognised qualifications in health and safety, literacy, numeracy, and information and communications technology. Learners are able to gain internal certificates in the safe operation of a range of construction and garden machinery.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject area

Entry to Employment (E2E)	Good: Grade 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

3. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievements and standards, the quality of the provision and equality of opportunity are all good. Provision in E2E is also good. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. Derby Skillbuild has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Success rates are good and there has been a steady increase in the number of learners going into positive outcomes since the contract started. In 2004/05 the figure was 35%, in 2005/06 it increased to 66%, in 2006/07 it fell slightly to 56% and it is currently at 73%. As a small company with just four staff the potential for disruption caused by any staff absence is quite high and business planning to make contingencies is not being routinely carried out. There is no effective target-setting for staff or learners to raise aspirations and improve quality. Lessons are not systematically observed for quality improvement and staff development purposes.
5. The self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive. It takes into account the views of staff, learners and all other stakeholders. Accurate data is used to show how success rates have improved and learners' destinations are recorded. The latest self-assessment report was written in August 2007, just before the inspection. The report is clearly written and inspectors agreed with most of the grades in the report. They gave a lower grade for capacity to improve and agreed with all the other grades. A development plan has been devised to improve the provision. Progress with the development plan actions are monitored at staff meetings and at management committee meetings.

Key strengths

- Good progression into employment, further education and training
- Good achievement of work related qualifications
- Very good standard of practical work
- Particularly effective teaching of practical skills
- Good pastoral support
- Good communications
- Good approach to regenerating the local environment and developing learners' skills
- Good recruitment and selection of disaffected learners

Key areas for improvement

- The range, planning and methods of teaching
- Target-setting in progress reviews

- The incomplete quality improvement arrangements
- The insufficient business planning

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

6. Achievement and standards overall are good. Learners' progression into employment, further education and training is good. The rate of positive outcomes have increased from 35% in 2004/05 to 66% in 2005/06, declined to 57% in 2006/07 and is currently at 73%. Progression into employment at 36% over the past three years is good.
7. Learners' achievement of work related qualifications is very good. Most learners gain work related nationally accredited qualifications in manual handling and health and safety. In the previous year, 86% of the learners have gained qualifications in foundation health and safety, and 81% in manual handling. They also acquire skills in the safe handling and operating of various machines and gain internally accredited certificates. These certificates enhance their future job prospects or chances to enter into further education and training. The achievement of qualifications for learners in literacy is good with 50% achieving at Level 1 and 71% at Level 2. The achievement for six learners following numeracy courses at Level 1 and 2 is good.
8. The standard of learners' practical work is good. They develop a broad range of practical skills such as bricklaying, painting, decorating, decking, landscaping, laying turf and operating horticultural machinery. The standard of learners' work in computer technology and in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The standard of some learners' behaviour and conduct in classrooms is poor. However, they soon make substantial gains in motivation and benefit from raised levels of confidence and self-esteem. Learners attend regularly and their attendance levels are satisfactory at 90%. There are well produced portfolios of learners work. Displayed in the training centre are photographs celebrating learners' successes as well as articles about their work taken from the local newspapers. The provider accurately assessed achievement and standards in the self-assessment report.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

9. The quality of provision is good. The teaching of practical skills is particularly good. The tutor plans lessons carefully and uses good demonstration skills. The explanation of tasks is clear with a strong emphasis on health and safety. The examples of previously successful learners are used well to motivate current learners and encourage them throughout.
10. The programme meets the needs of the learners and the requirements of examination bodies well. The range of enrichment activities such as football and petanque is appropriate. Learners attend the training centre for 16 hours per week. They do not fully develop an appreciation of commitment of a full time job as they are not encouraged to increase their working hours at the centre. Jobsearch training is appropriate and it helps learners to develop their computer skills while searching for jobs on the Internet and in the local press.

11. Staff provide good pastoral support. Most learners have had a poor experience at school or have sometimes not attended school for long periods. Many face barriers such as family relationship breakdown, mental health issues, housing problems or have a history of youth offending. Staff help them to resolve issues in their personal lives very effectively. Staff are knowledgeable and provide care, advice and support to help the learners settle down into learning quickly. The quality of information, advice and guidance provided is good. Staff work very well with the connexions service and other agencies. The identification of, and support for, additional learning needs in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The good support for learners was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report.
12. The provider has a satisfactory level and range of learning resources. These include books, journals and literacy and numeracy resources and a good number of up-to-date laptop computers with useful software programmes. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced.
13. The range, planning and methods of teaching are areas for improvement, particularly in theory lessons. The provider did not identify this in the self-assessment report. Tutors fail to make sufficient checks on the learning taking place and do not get learners to think about the skills they are learning. They do not plan the learning sufficiently to cater for different needs. They fail to use a variety of teaching methods. Tutors often dominate the lessons and learners are not sufficiently involved in group activities. They do not sufficiently express learning objectives and share these with the learners nor recapitulate on the learning and encourage learners to apply the skills learnt and knowledge gained in their lives and workplaces.
14. Staff identify the needs of the learners accurately but tutors do not set specific, measurable and time bound targets to address these needs. The findings from the previous progress reviews are not revisited to measure the progress made. Inspectors saw a very effective progress review in which all parties including a parent, the learner, a connexions service personal adviser, a tutor and a manager were fully involved and the learner was able to find a clear direction for himself and all parties were contributing to his progress.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

15. Derby Skillbuild has been actively involved in regenerating the local environment while also developing their learners' work skills. They lease a 12 acre piece of land from the local council that had previously been used as a waste tip. Staff and learners from Derby Skillbuild have landscaped the site by planting trees, shrubs and grass, and turning it into a haven for wildlife and a well maintained training facility. Learners benefit by learning to build walls, erect fences, lay paving, planting, improving

and maintaining the landscape. The site is between a large housing estate where many of the learners live and an industrial area. The site is now a pleasant barrier between local residential housing and industry. Learners are proud to have helped create this site. This was highlighted in the self-assessment report.

16. Communications at Derby Skillbuild are good. The management committee meet every month and minutes of the meetings are provided for staff to keep them informed about strategic issues. The project manager communicates well with the staff through daily briefings to discuss relevant issues and to enquire about the progress that learners are making. The manager also makes a point of speaking to the learners each day to ask about the progress they are making and to discuss any issues or concerns that he or they may have. Learners find this useful and say that he is firm but fair with them. The small team of tutors work well together and help each other to the mutual benefit of staff and learners. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report.
17. As a small company, management is informal and there are few prescribed systems and processes. Essential business policies and procedures such as those relating to equal opportunities, grievance and discipline do exist but some are in need of updating. This process has started but is not yet complete. There is no system currently operating to observe the quality of teaching and training to provide tutors with written feedback for quality improvement purposes. This was identified in the self-assessment report.
18. Although the management committee regularly meet to review the performance of the company there is a lack of business planning. Business planning to cover eventualities, contingencies, objectives and target-setting are not in place. This was not recognised in the self-assessment report.
19. The company has an equal opportunities policy that was updated in January 2007. Learners receive information about their rights and responsibilities at the initial E2E induction. Equality and diversity training is provided during the induction and throughout the E2E programme. At learner progress reviews, questions are asked about learners' general well-being, welfare and their treatment. Learners are given clear information about discipline and grievance procedures and these are rigorously applied to ensure that harassment and bullying are actively discouraged. Attempts to increase the number of learners on the E2E programme from ethnic minority groups to at least reflect the local community have been successful. However, attempts to recruit more females onto the E2E programme have so far been unsuccessful with just one female out of 22 learners on the programme.
There are no targets set to try to address this under-representation on the programme. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities and respect each other accordingly. Poor behaviour and disrespect is not tolerated.
20. There is good recruitment and progression of disaffected learners. The local Connexions service recognise that Derby Skillbuild take more of the 'hard to place' learners. These are often learners with complex social and learning difficulties. Many are from broken homes and some are ex-offenders. About 50% of the current learners have been identified as having learning difficulties. Despite the high numbers, Derby Skillbuild is successful at progressing learners into positive outcomes. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report.

What learners like:

- Practical work and learning new things
- Guidance and direction – ‘I am actually doing something with my life, rather than getting into trouble with the police’
- Help and support – ‘they help me with anything I ask for’
- The learning environment – ‘it is a lot better here than the school. I give it 9/10’
- The flexibility of the programme – ‘you do not get too bored here. The day is broken up into various activities’
- Good teaching and staff – ‘they have helped me realise what I want to do’
- ‘They improved my basic skills’
- ‘They helped me to develop various skills such as bricklaying’
- Staff are very helpful

What learners think could improve:

- ‘Get rid of those that don’t want to learn and spoil it for others’
- More facilities for break times such as a pool table

Annex

Learners' achievements

Outcomes on **Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes** managed by the provider 2005 to 2006

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
04-05	60	34 (57%)	21 (35%)
05-06	71	55 (77%)	47 (66%)
06-07	59	35 (59%)	33 (56%)

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period