

The University of Lincoln

Partial reinspection report

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Type of provider: Higher Education institution

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Introduction

1. The college was last inspected in March 2009. Its overall effectiveness was judged as satisfactory. All aspects and subject area grades were judged satisfactory with the exception of leadership and management which were judged inadequate. As part of this monitoring visit, leadership and management have been reinspected.

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

Aspect of the common inspection framework	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Leadership and management	4	3
Safeguarding	-	3
Equality and diversity	3	3

Context

2. Riseholme College is the University of Lincoln's specialist college for land-based and food manufacturing industries. It is medium sized and offers further education provision from two campuses; the Riseholme campus, on the outskirts of Lincoln, and the Holbeach campus, situated south of Boston. The Riseholme campus specialises in land-based provision. Its substantial estate includes a farm, an animal centre, an equine unit and a horticultural unit. The Holbeach campus was developed in partnership with the food manufacturing industry and provides specialist training for the industry.
3. Approximately 314 students are aged 16 to 18 and study mainly full time. Some 1,418 adult students study mainly part time. Leadership and management of the university's further education provision was reinspected.

Leadership and management

4. Managers are promoting ambition effectively. The further education provision is now benefiting from a stable management structure and a clear vision of the college's role within the university and its place in the locality. Operating plans are used well to monitor progress in meeting the college's clear strategic objectives. Managers have taken effective actions to resolve all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, although it is too early to assess the full impact of actions in a few areas.
5. Governance is satisfactory. The chair of the university's board of governors is closely involved in determining the strategic direction of the college. Actions have been taken since the last inspection to enable the university's board to monitor the further education provision more effectively. In particular, a sub-group to oversee this work has been established.
6. The college has prioritised the promotion of safeguarding across the college. Students feel safe and very few incidents of bullying and harassment occur.

Students, however, are not routinely included in discussing health and safety. Safeguarding has recently been added to the remit of a working group which meets regularly. There is close liaison with the university's safeguarding team with considerable benefits from drawing on a wider pool of professional expertise. Referrals are dealt with promptly and effectively. Training has been provided for most staff and governors with further training planned before the end of the year. Contracted staff are trained, but this is not formally recorded. Vetting checks are undertaken on all academic staff and recorded centrally, although some information, such as identity checks and countersignatories to documents, are held separately in staff files rather than being easily accessible through a central list.

7. Health and safety is reinforced well through the curriculum. Accidents are recorded and there is adequate analysis of the number and pattern of occurrences. A procedure for recording 'near misses' has been put in place recently. Detailed audits of health and safety take place regularly.
8. The college is responsive to the needs of land-based employers across the region and has made a significant response to meeting the needs of the food-processing industry. The college recognises, however, that the extent to which employers are involved formally in course evaluation is an area for improvement. Students' views are expressed clearly by student representatives with good arrangements for liaison with higher education students' representatives. At present, students' involvement in evaluating their courses in course team meetings is too limited.
9. Much has been done to strengthen arrangements to promote equality and diversity since the last inspection. The university-wide single equality scheme has been published with a full set of impact measures for the further education provision. Further education and higher education students integrate well across the faculty and the atmosphere is friendly and harmonious. The breadth of support for different groups of students to ensure they all have an equal chance of success has improved through strong links with the university's support services. For the first time, data about the performance of different groups have been analysed fully. This analysis shows some gaps in achievement by gender. The college has acted promptly to put actions in place to resolve this but the impact is not yet fully evident.
10. The tutorial programme now includes two mandatory lessons on equality and diversity; but there are few resources to support these lessons. Students have a low awareness of equality and diversity matters. Opportunities for developing equality and diversity themes in lessons are rarely maximised as recognised by the college in its recent moderation of lesson observation records.
11. The arrangements for quality improvement and self-assessment have been revised significantly since the last inspection. Better use is made of data, which are now more reliable and accessible. The arrangements for assessing the quality of teaching and learning have improved following a review; training for observers and the gleaning of good practice from other colleges. Inspectors were mostly in agreement with the lesson observation grades awarded by the

college's observers. Much more thorough arrangements for course review are being implemented, but these are at an early stage. The latest self-assessment is a more accurate reflection of the college than the previous report.

12. Value for money is satisfactory. Resources are satisfactory overall. Some specialist areas are well resourced, but a minority of the teaching and residential accommodation is in need of improvement.

What does Riseholme College need to do to improve further?

- Involve students and employers to a much greater extent in planning and evaluating the curriculum and in reviewing the quality of the provision in order to reflect their views more fully.
- Embed the arrangements for course reviews and ensure that reviews are rigorous and take place in a timely way.
- Develop teachers' skills in promoting equality and diversity themes in lessons and through tutorials by increasing the level of their training and providing exemplars of good practice. Use the lesson observation scheme to evaluate the promotion of equality and diversity by ensuring that observers include judgements about these themes as part of their findings.

Additional Theme

Inspectors explored the following theme as part of this reinspection.

Outcomes for learners

How much progress has been made in improving outcomes for learners? Reasonable progress

13. Long course success rates have increased at almost all levels since the last inspection. In 2008/09, compared to national rates for specialist colleges, long course success rates are above average at all levels for adults and close to or above average for 16 to 18 years olds. Retention rates increased significantly in 2008/09. In the current year, college data suggest that retention rates have improved further. Short and very short course success rates have declined since the last inspection, particularly for adults on short course where both retention and pass rates fell. In the current year retention rates on all short courses are much improved.
14. The performance of different groups is now monitored closely. Students receiving additional learning support achieve at least as well as their peers and often better. Data show an emerging gap over two years between the success rates of men and women; at level 2 women under-perform and at level 3 men under-perform. Targets are in place to narrow this gap in the current year although these are not yet specific enough at course level.
15. Framework success rates for apprentices have improved considerably and are high. However, too many apprentices have not completed their courses in the

time allowed, mainly because of the setting of unrealistic end dates. Current apprentices are all likely to complete within the allocated time and are monitored very closely. Students on Train to Gain courses succeed well within the time allowed.

16. The college is developing an 'in-house' system for measuring the value added to each student's learning, but this has not yet been implemented. Arrangements for gathering data to support the college's judgements in relation to students' personal and social development and their future economic well-being are developing. Data show high rates of progression between levels of study and an increasing percentage of students moving into higher education, which is high in several areas. Attendance is at least satisfactory and good in agriculture and horticulture. The collection of other data, such as participation in enrichment activities, is starting to take place in order to evaluate formally the impact of this provision.

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