

# Derby College

Partial reinspection report

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Unique reference number: 133585  
Name of lead inspector: Paul Joyce HMI  
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Type of provider: General Further Education College  
Address: Prince Charles Avenue  
Derby  
DE22 4LR  
Telephone number: 01332 520371

## Introduction

1. Derby College and the former South East Derbyshire College merged in February 2010. This reinspection focused on the areas judged inadequate at the former South East Derbyshire College when it was inspected in April 2009 judging the progress made in improving provision and outcomes for learners since the merger.

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

Aspect of the common inspection framework	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Equality and diversity	4	3

## Context

2. Derby College is large general further education college offering a wide range of further and higher education programmes. The college operates from six main sites including the major sites of the former South East Derbyshire College that were the focus of the reinspection visit. These sites in Ilkeston and Heanor serve the boroughs of Erewash and Amber Valley and offer courses in all subject areas with the exception of agriculture, horticulture and animal care. Work-based learning and Train to Gain programmes are also offered in a few curriculum areas.
3. The inspection monitoring visit in December 2009 judged that reasonable progress was being made in improving the promotion of equality and diversity and that significant progress had been made in improving provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies.

## Equality and diversity

4. Equality and diversity are satisfactory. The college has appropriate policies and procedures in place including a single equalities scheme and these are monitored regularly at committee meetings and by governors. The college monitors the success rates of different groups of students and has been successful in narrowing the achievement gap for many groups. However, in 2008/09 overall success rates for the relatively small number of students aged 16 to 18 from minority ethnic heritage were low and the college failed to meet its improvement target for this group. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups, whilst above the proportion in the local population, remains low and the college did not meet its target participation rate for the recruitment of students from minority ethnic backgrounds in the current academic year.
5. The promotion of equality and diversity within the curriculum is satisfactory overall and is good in some areas. Initiatives to encourage non-stereotypical recruitment and other initiatives to promote equality and diversity within individual curriculum areas have had some success. Students have a

satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity issues overall, although for many this is only at a basic level. The tutorial scheme includes sessions designed to promote students understanding of equality and diversity although the quality of the students' experience and the development of their knowledge and understanding is underdeveloped in some curriculum areas. Whilst the college monitors aspects of equality and diversity promotion well, the impact on students' knowledge and understanding is not monitored effectively or evaluated.

What does Derby College need to do to improve further?

- Further reduce the gap in achievement by some minority ethnic groups, particularly for learners aged 16-18 so they achieve as well as other students.
- Ensure a more consistent approach to the promotion of equality and diversity within curriculum areas and across the college so all students develop a good level of understanding.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of equality and diversity promotion on students' knowledge and understanding and use the information to plan development activity.

## Engineering and manufacturing technologies

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

Subject area/type of provision	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	4	3

### Context

6. The department offers a range of full and part-time motor vehicle courses from foundation to advanced level. The majority of learners are aged 16 to 18 and are male. At the time of inspection, approximately 120 learners were on courses, including 30 on work-based learning programmes. A further 45 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend motor vehicle courses.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Success rates on most courses have improved consistently and are now similar to national averages. However, the success rate on the level 2 certificate in vehicle fitting is very low and well below the national average rate.
- Student attendance is satisfactory overall and retention rates continue to improve. College data show that in-year retention for students aged 16 to 18 is high; but fewer adult learners have been retained on courses in the current academic year.
- Success rates for apprentices on work-based learning programmes are satisfactory. In 2008/09, the qualification success rate for motor vehicle apprentices was just below the national average rate for the sector. Most apprentices that achieve the target qualification do so within the timescale set and the timely achievement rate is high.
- The standard of students' work is satisfactory. Portfolios meet awarding body requirements, but too often evidence entries are perfunctory and do not contain sufficient detail. Apprentices' portfolios are more comprehensive; but occasionally include assessment records that do not fully detail how a task was completed.
- Students' practical work is of a high standard. In workshops, students are confident in the use of tools and equipment. They complete practical tasks quickly and work confidently and safely.
- The standard of teaching and learning continues to improve and a higher proportion of lessons are now good or better. Teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies and use learning activities that interest and motivate students.
- Teaching staff have good vocational and industrial experience and relevant technical qualifications. Many are relatively new to teaching and are undertaking appropriate teacher training courses. They value their teacher

training and are finding it very useful in helping them to convey effectively their extensive knowledge to students.

- The identification of students' additional learning needs is comprehensive. Support is arranged quickly and is effective in helping students to achieve. Students in receipt of support perform equally as well as their peers and those receiving individual support away from the classroom perform slightly better. Teachers and specialist support staff work well together to help students progress.
- Resources have improved since the previous inspection and are satisfactory. The classrooms now used are spacious, well equipped and well suited to the teaching of motor vehicle theory. Teachers make good use of the ILT facilities. Workshops have an appropriate range of vehicles and equipment and are tidy and well maintained.
- The college offers students a good range of opportunities for vocational enrichment. Many external visits have been arranged to vehicle manufacturers and motor vehicle related activities. Students speak positively about these activities that help further develop their knowledge and understanding of industry practices.
- Leadership and management are effective at improving the quality of provision and outcomes for students. Managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement and have very detailed plans to further enhance the quality of training provided.

### What does Derby College need to do to improve further?

- Raise success rates on the minority of courses that do not perform as well as others by ensuring guidance and support arrangements are effective in retaining students until the completion of the course.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning by the further professional development of teaching staff.
- Improve the quality of students' portfolios by encouraging students to include specific and descriptive information about what they did during assessments.

## Additional Themes

Inspectors explored the following themes as part of this reinspection.

### Self-assessment and improvement planning

What actions have been taken to clarify the college's strategic direction and to develop capacity to improve? Significant progress

7. The college has invested significant resources in promoting the opportunities and benefits of the merger and have opened a marketing suite in Ilkeston town centre and produced high quality marketing and promotional material. Staff and students are well informed about developments and are generally positive and supportive of the beneficial changes that have already been made and that continue.
8. Following the merger, a new senior manager has been appointed with responsibility for the college sites in Ilkeston and Heanor. The management structure is being revised further and detailed curriculum and accommodation planning has been completed.
9. The Ilkeston and Heanor sites are being re-branded and over the summer period a number of improvements will be made to accommodation and resources. From September, the Ilkeston and Heanor sites will be served by college transport to enable easier travel arrangements to these sites by students from further afield and to bring students from the Ilkeston and Heanor areas to attend courses at other Derby College sites. The college is harmonising policies and procedures and from September all college sites will operate using the same arrangements that include standardised quality assurance procedures, including self-assessment.

### Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in securing improvements to qualification success rates? Reasonable progress

10. Overall long course success rates continue to improve at a steady pace and in 2008/09 were around the national average rate for similar colleges. Overall long course success rates at all levels for both students aged 16-18 and for adults are close to the corresponding national average. On short courses, student numbers have reduced significantly and continue to do so but success rates remain very low indeed. In subject areas long course success rates vary widely. For example, in hairdressing and beauty therapy they are high; but in construction, media and business, success rates are low.
11. On work-based learning programmes, overall success rates in 2008/09 were well below national averages and declined when compared to the previous year. However, in-year data for 2009/10 show a significant improvement in

overall success rates to around the national average. Timely success rates remain around the national average. Student numbers on work-based programmes have reduced and are low. On Train to Gain courses, primarily in health and social care, in-year data show the overall success rate is close to the high national average although timely success rates are currently below average.

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 0300 1231231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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