

# Short inspection of The Ridge Employability College

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 June 2024

## **Outcome**

The Ridge Employability College continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

The Ridge Employability College is an independent specialist college in Adwick-le-Street, near Doncaster, that provides further education and training for learners aged between 16 and 25 who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. At the time of the inspection, the college had 43 learners enrolled.

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

Learners successfully develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours during their time at the college and are prepared well for adulthood and employment. Most progress to positive destinations, including voluntary work, employment and further study.

Learners become more competent and confident during their time at the college. Teaching staff use their knowledge and expertise well to provide learning that is effective in promoting and facilitating learners' knowledge and skills development, including their English and mathematical skills. English tutors successfully develop learners' reading skills, so that learners become more confident in interpreting information. Learners make good progress in developing their skills in mathematics lessons and apply and strengthen these skills in their vocational lessons. For example, learners in horticulture use simple ratios to mix plant food.

A few learners do not make the same level of progress as their peers and do not complete their courses quickly enough. As leaders rightly recognise, this is due to their lower starting points which means that expected end dates are unrealistic and that these learners require an extension to their study programmes.

Students feel safe in the college, and they know how to report concerns. Leaders and managers prioritise learners' safety and well-being to ensure that learners are free from harm in the college and when participating in external activities.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum which meets learners' individual needs and support requirements. Learners study an employability programme that provides them with education, training and support to develop the skills and knowledge needed for employment in vocational areas such as hairdressing, horticulture and dog grooming. The curriculum also includes English, mathematics, information technology and external work experience. In addition, learners take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which helps to develop their personal, social and communication skills, improves their confidence and enhances their preparation for employment.

The curriculum is logically planned and appropriately sequenced to enable learners to develop key knowledge and skills progressively through a range of classroom and work-based learning. For example, learners in horticulture first learn how to use a range of tools safely, including shears and secateurs, and the importance of wearing the appropriate personal protective clothing. As they progress, they develop their knowledge and skills by learning how use tools to process compost safely, plant seedlings and maintain various fruits and vegetables.

In a few instances, staff do not ensure that learners process and understand key information, which impacts on learners' ability to understand fully key aspects of learning. For example, a few learners with less well-developed skills are not provided with sufficient time to consolidate their skills before moving on to the next activity.

Learners produce work of the expected standard and progressively develop their knowledge and skills. For example, in functional skills English, learners develop their writing skills and progress from constructing simple sentences to writing descriptive texts. They progressively improve their use of punctuation, including capital letters and full stops. As learners develop their English skills, they learn how formal and informal language is used in writing.

Leaders and managers have implemented a careers guidance programme that effectively meets learners' individual needs. As a result, learners are able to consider and plan their next steps. For example, learners engage in a 'working Wednesday' activity where they speak to employees from different sectors, including healthcare professionals, to develop their understanding of the responsibilities and behaviours required for employment in a range of vocational areas. Leaders and managers have established effective working partnerships with local and national employers, including a national telecommunications company, which enable them to provide learners with information about a broad range of employment opportunities.

Leaders recruit teaching staff who are qualified and experienced in their roles. Staff benefit from relevant and meaningful professional development to develop their pedagogical practice and vocational knowledge. Teaching staff engage in training to increase their understanding of learners' disabilities, including autism and attention

deficit hyperactivity disorder. They learn how to implement effective teaching and learning strategies which meet learners' individual needs and support requirements.

Leaders and managers carry out effective quality assurance activities to ensure that learners benefit from a good standard of teaching. These include observations of teaching, informal classroom visits and reviews of learners' work. They identify clear actions for improvement and monitor carefully that these are implemented and have the desired impact.

Leaders place a key focus on the well-being of their staff. They have implemented a range of support for staff to promote emotional and physical well-being, including fitness classes and social events. Staff appreciate the support that they receive from leaders and managers.

Leaders and managers have in place an effective governance board. Governors draw on their experience from education to support senior leaders and ensure that learners are receiving a good standard of education. They receive regular updates on the quality of education, on safeguarding management and monitoring, and on feedback from learners and parents. As a result, they are able to provide effective and useful challenge to senior leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Ensure that all teaching staff implement effective strategies to enable those learners with less well-developed knowledge and skills to process and fully understand key information.
- Continue to increase the rigour of the application process to ensure that those learners with low starting points are able to complete their courses in the planned time and move more quickly to voluntary and paid employment.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142921
<b>Address</b>	10 Ebor Court Malton Way Adwick-le-Street Doncaster DN6 7FE
<b>Contact number</b>	01302 897445
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theridgecollege.co.uk">www.theridgecollege.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Melanie Atkin
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent specialist college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 to 9 November 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since The Ridge Employability College was judged to be good in November 2018.

The inspection team was assisted by the head of college, 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 visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Glenise Burrell, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Neil Clark

Ofsted Inspector

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