

Inspection of YMCA Derbyshire

Inspection dates:

29 July to 1 August 2025

Overall effectiveness**Good**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Education programmes for young people

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires Improvement

Information about this provider

Key College is the education arm of YMCA Derbyshire, a charity supporting vulnerable young people and local communities across Derby and the surrounding area. The college operates from several sites in and around the city. Learners study vocational programmes at entry level, level 1 or level 2 in subjects such as hospitality and catering, childcare, health and social care, and sport. Alongside these courses, learners study English, mathematics and employability skills. At the time of the inspection, there were 47 learners in learning, all of whom were aged 16 to 18. Seven learners had an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

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

Learners benefit from well-planned courses and personalised support that helps them enjoy their learning and make good progress. They value the strong relationships with staff, who they describe as caring, approachable and quick to offer help. This support builds their confidence, and learners are rightly proud of what they achieve.

Learners gain valuable experience through well-structured courses shaped by local employers and community organisations. Supported interns take part in structured placements across retail, food and warehousing, which help them build a wide range of practical skills. Hospitality learners prepare and serve meals for local residents, while childcare learners complete nursery placements. These opportunities prepare learners for the workplace and help them understand their role in the wider community.

Learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive tailored support and inclusive teaching. Staff use EHC plans effectively to plan learning and make appropriate adjustments. Learners with SEND feel well supported and achieve strong outcomes as a result of the targeted help they receive.

Learners feel safe because staff act quickly when issues arise, promote respectful behaviour and create a calm, inclusive environment. They know how to ask for help and trust staff to support them.

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

Leaders have a strong understanding of their learners' needs, including those who have previously disengaged from education or faced significant barriers to learning. They design flexible, well-planned courses that reflect local job opportunities and individual learning goals. Leaders create programmes that prepare learners for work and further study. Through small class sizes, skilled staff and personalised support, they re-engage learners who are at risk of not being in education, employment or training. Many learners make progress where they have not before and move on to positive next steps.

Teachers plan learning in clear steps so that learners understand new ideas and remember what they have learned. In childcare, for example, teachers start with child development before moving on to planning play and managing change. In hospitality, learners begin with basic cooking techniques and progress to preparing full meals and running front-of-house service for external guests. This step-by-step approach helps learners build knowledge and skills over time and prepares them well for future learning and work.

Teachers help learners apply their knowledge in practical ways that reflect real workplace situations. In health and social care, learners write care plans, explain how to manage risk and take part in discussions about safeguarding and

professional conduct. In childcare, learners plan play activities and design learning linked to cultural festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. These activities help learners understand how to meet the needs of children from different backgrounds. These realistic tasks prepare learners well for the expectations of employment.

In most cases, teachers support learners effectively to make progress and improve. They use clear explanations, practical activities and helpful feedback. In subjects such as childcare and health and social care, learners develop confidence and produce work that is increasingly well structured and reflective. However, in a small number of lessons, teachers move through content too quickly or provide too little time for practice. As a result, not all learners make the same level of progress or retain what they have learned.

Leaders promote an inclusive culture where learners feel respected and valued. In some areas such as childcare learners talk confidently about democracy and mutual respect. However, a small number of learners struggle to recall meaningful discussions about fundamental British values or connect them to their role in modern Britain.

Learners benefit from helpful and well-planned careers advice and guidance. Tailored support such as CV help, mock interviews and industry visits raises many learners' aspirations and supports them to take their next steps into work or further study.

Learners achieve well on their vocational courses. They develop strong skills and knowledge that they apply confidently in real work environments. This practical experience prepares them effectively for their next steps in work or further study. Leaders have taken effective steps to improve outcomes in English and mathematics, and there are clear signs of progress. Learners who do not achieve a full qualification in these subjects receive targeted support and make measurable gains from their starting points.

Leaders and trustees have taken clear action to improve the quality of education since the last inspection. They have strengthened curriculum planning, improved how they review teaching and provided better support for staff development. Trustees use their expertise to challenge leaders and ensure that progress stays on track. Leaders now have an accurate view of strengths and areas still to improve, and they are making swift, focused improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure teachers allow enough time for learners to understand and apply new knowledge fully before moving on.

- Embed British values consistently across the curriculum.
- Increase the proportion of learners who achieve their English and mathematics qualifications.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58237
Address	YMCA Key College 2nd Floor Derwent Stepping Stones Nursery Building St Marks Road Derby East Midlands DE21 6AH
Contact number	01332854646
Website	www.ymcaderbyshire.org.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Gillian Sewell
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 February, and 28 February and 1 March 2023
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of lifelong learning, 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

Sarah Biddulph, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nikki Brady	His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Worgs	His Majesty's Inspector
Russ Henry	His Majesty's Inspector

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