

Inspection of Moulton College

Inspection dates: 2–5 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Information about this provider

Moulton College is a specialist land-based college in Northamptonshire. Young people at the college study full-time courses in animal management, equine studies, sport, agriculture and construction. Almost all of them study at level 1, 2 or 3. A few learners study on supported learning courses for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most of these learners study at entry level.

Adult learners study full time alongside young people, or on part-time vocational courses. They mainly study subjects, such as business, information and communication technology (ICT), stonemasonry and horticulture. Adults following business and ICT courses study remotely.

Most learners study at the main college campus in Moulton. A smaller number study at a satellite centre in Higham Ferrers.

At the time of the inspection, there were 1,777 young people at the college, and 377 adults. Leaders could not recruit new apprentices due to the previous inadequate inspection grade.

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

Learners enjoy their studies at Moulton College. They appreciate the support that lecturers give them in class, such as encouragement and additional explanations when they are struggling or do not understand a topic. Learners rightly value the careful focus that lecturers place on their possible career options during courses.

In the large majority of cases, young people and adults develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need, to pass their qualifications and progress. Young learners feel well prepared for their next steps. Adult learners move to specialised roles, or become self-employed in trades linked to their study.

Leaders have developed high-quality facilities, for example a purpose-built animal welfare centre for animal care learners. This means that learners benefit from good-quality exposure to the world of work even when they study on campus. Managers use employer forums to help plan the content of courses, but this is not yet consistent across the college.

Adult learners benefit from good relationships with local community organisations. For example, stonemasonry learners create statues that they display in a local park, and furniture making learners restore items for charity.

Learners receive support to help them live healthy lives and manage stress, such as strategies to help manage their workloads. Lecturers discuss citizenship-related themes in classes, for example the importance of respect and integrity in workplaces. Leaders have developed a wide-ranging personal development curriculum for learners, although staff do not always cover topics in enough depth with those who study at level 3 and above.

Young people appreciate how lecturers and managers treat them with respect, and have high expectations for their behaviour. They rightly feel safe on the college sites. They behave well in lessons and when moving around the campuses. In most cases, learners arrive punctually to their lessons and work well with their peers. However, leaders and managers have not yet ensured that all learners attend their classes at consistently high rates.

Although learners with high needs feel safe and enjoy their classes, they do not benefit consistently from the same high academic standards as their peers. For example, on supported learning courses they develop employment and independence skills well, but not all learners develop their English and mathematics knowledge to the same level.

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

Leaders have successfully undertaken a range of activities to improve the quality of education. For example, they have developed the structure and content of the college's curriculums, and developed lecturers' teaching skills. Leaders are determined that the college should offer all learners high-quality courses.

Managers and lecturers plan the structure of courses carefully. They ensure that learners do not become overloaded with new knowledge, because they space the most complex topics throughout courses. Lecturers and managers also make sure that courses closely match learners' future career goals. For example, learners who study sport at level 3 can select a variety of course pathways to help them develop the specific knowledge and skills they will need for their chosen career.

Managers have recently altered the supported learning curriculum. They rightly recognise that the previous curriculum was not ambitious enough for learners with high needs. At the time of the inspection, managers had not fully implemented these changes. This means that in a few subjects, learners still do not benefit from teaching activities that are challenging enough for them.

In most subjects, lecturers plan classes with a strong link between theory learning and practical activities. For example, in level 3 animal care lessons, lecturers interweave classroom activities effectively, so that learners quickly apply their theoretical learning to practical tasks. In a few cases, for example on some construction courses, lecturers do not plan classes well enough to enable learners to do this.

Lecturers adjust teaching to help learners grasp difficult topics and skills. For example, when learners who study GCSE English struggle to analyse texts, lecturers refine their approach and reteach key analytical skills. This helps learners to conduct more thorough analysis when reading subsequent texts. On courses such as construction level 2 and animal care level 3, lecturers use quizzes effectively to check learners' understanding. They use the results of these quizzes to plan future teaching, so that learners improve in areas where their knowledge is weaker.

Learners benefit from ample opportunities to practise and develop new knowledge and skills during their courses. Adult learners that study furniture making at level 2 master how to use a chisel on offcuts of wood before they attempt more intricate cutting activities on furniture. Learners who study functional mathematics at level 1 complete skills booklets to test how well they can recall a variety of mathematical functions. On vocational courses such as sport level 3, lecturers use an array of useful activities to help learners remember key terminology.

In most cases, lecturers conduct timely assessments and follow these with useful feedback that enables learners to make improvements to their work. During in-class assessment tasks, lecturers are adept at quickly spotting errors in learners' work. They provide concise feedback that enables them to make improvements. For

example, stonemasonry lecturers give adult learners crucial advice which helps them to improve their stonework. On a few courses, for example within construction, teaching is less effective because lecturers do not assess carefully enough what learners know and can do.

Learning support assistants (LSAs) who work with learners with SEND have suitable experience and training. They support learners in class effectively. For example, they enable those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder to remain focused on classroom activities. Assistance from a few LSAs for those on supported learning courses is not good enough. In these cases, LSAs inhibit learners from learning more independently.

Lecturers make suitable adjustments for learners with high needs on vocational courses, such as use of assistive technology for those with hearing impairments. Managers work well with external specialist services such as physiotherapists, which benefits learners on supported learning courses.

In the majority of subjects, learners achieve externally accredited qualifications at high rates. Although learners that study mathematics achieve their qualifications at rates comparable to the national picture, these require further improvement.

Learners' written and practical work is mostly of a good standard, and in a minority of cases of a very high standard, for example on stonemasonry courses. Learners that study agriculture at level 3 produce written work that becomes more analytical and evaluative as they develop greater knowledge.

Lecturers ensure that lessons include all learners. For example, learners with anxiety disorders receive additional help so that they attend and participate well in classes. Lecturers in sport level 3 ensure that the few female learners on the course get specific support, such as nutrition sessions that lecturers tailor to their needs.

Young learners have a thorough understanding of the importance of equality and diversity, as well as fundamental British values. Lecturers promote these themes well during their courses. Adult learners have a limited knowledge of these themes.

Learners benefit from a well-planned focus on careers. This includes a range of college-wide events, such as careers fairs for those that plan to study at university or follow an apprenticeship course. At individual course level, managers and lecturers also consider careers carefully. For example, construction learners meet local employers, who give them insights into working in the industry. Learners with high needs receive specialist careers support.

Leaders and managers have developed suitable plans to help staff improve their teaching skills. This includes specific training for new lecturers, and frequent opportunities for all lecturers to undertake continuous professional development. Leaders have successfully altered most of their processes to help them scrutinise the quality of the education their staff provide. However, during their scrutiny of taught lessons, managers do not always focus closely enough on the skills that lecturers

need to improve the most. Subsequent support from coaches does not, as a result, match the areas in which lecturers most need to improve.

Leaders have successfully changed the culture of the college. They have focused closely on improving learner behaviour. Most lecturers feel well supported by leaders.

Governors bring an array of specialist expertise to the college. They receive detailed, pertinent information about the college's performance, and use this to hold senior leaders to account. They understand their responsibilities with regard to equality, diversity and safeguarding. They are passionate about how the college supports vulnerable groups of learners, such as looked after children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff at all levels take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They act in the best interests of learners. They identify those that need additional support, and secure appropriate help for them. Learners rightly value the close focus that leaders have on safeguarding issues such as sexual harm. In the few instances when such issues occur, leaders and managers act swiftly and appropriately.

Leaders and managers respond well to the local risks that learners face outside college. They identify, for example, which groups of learners are at greater risk of knife crime, and prioritise tutorial support on this topic in conjunction with the local police force.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should improve the quality of education for learners on supported learning courses, so that learners develop an array of new skills, and useful accredited qualifications.
- Leaders should ensure that all learners attend lessons at high rates.
- Leaders should improve the pass rates for learners that take mathematics qualifications.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130772
Address	West Street Moulton Northampton Northamptonshire NN3 7RR
Contact number	01604491131
Website	https://www.moulton.ac.uk/
Principal/CEO	Corrie Harris
Provider type	Specialist further education college
Date of previous inspection	30 April–3 May 2019
Main subcontractors	Coventry Rugby Club

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal of curriculum, 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

Saul Pope, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russ Henry	Her Majesty's Inspector
Emma Woods	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bob Hamp	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Whelan	Her Majesty's Inspector
Angela Newton-Soanes	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Heaney	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Tyrrell	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Cannon	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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