

# Inspection of Hertford Regional College

Inspection dates: 2–5 November 2021

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

## Information about this provider

Hertford Regional College is a medium-sized, general further education college with campuses in Broxbourne and Ware. Most of its curriculum is offered at the Broxbourne site. At the Ware site, learners study art and design, and hairdressing and beauty-based qualifications. Learners with high needs study at the Ware site and have access to specialist resources.

Most learners are recruited from Broxbourne, East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest, Harlow and the London Borough of Enfield. The college works with five subcontractors. These subcontractors offer qualifications to learners and apprentices residing predominantly in Hertfordshire and the London boroughs. At the time of the inspection, around 3,027 learners were enrolled on full or part-time qualifications. Of these, 1,767 are aged 16 to 19, 849 are adults and 376 apprentices. 184 learners are in receipt of high needs funding.

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

Young learners on full-time qualifications, work and learn in a culture of high expectations and aspirations. They show respect for staff and each other and develop effective working relationships. Learners take pride in their work, develop in their self-confidence, and feel well prepared for their next steps into education, training or work.

Apprentices value learning from their teachers and trainers and report that 'they learn something new every day'. Apprentices learn relevant and industry standard practical skills in the college workshops, which they use immediately at their workplace. They are proud of being trusted by their employers to work independently as their knowledge and skills increase.

Learners with high needs are integrated very effectively into life at college. They know they are a valued part of the college community. They challenge themselves and each other very effectively to work towards living and working independently.

Adult learners on part-time qualifications are frustrated that they do not have access to the wider opportunities available to younger learners. They do not feel they receive effective help to progress swiftly into employment.

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

Leaders and managers carefully design high-quality education and training for young people and apprentices, including those with high needs. Leaders work effectively with local employers to design a curriculum which equips learners and apprentices with the skills and knowledge required by the local and regional employment market. As a result, learners and apprentices progress to successful and rewarding careers in their chosen sectors.

Learners and apprentices develop very good practical and academic skills because teachers and trainers continually challenge them to complete work to a very high standard. A significant proportion progress to higher levels of study or into well-paid work. Learners on carpentry and joinery qualifications, for example, develop the practical hand skills that enable them to gain work experience with relevant employers, such as cabinet makers. Art and design learners complete industrial briefs, such as those set by architects, to help shape the design for building a local arts centre. Learners studying motor vehicle maintenance skilfully link mathematical calculations of fuel to air ratios, which helps them to understand and articulate how this applies to fuel systems.

Learners with high needs benefit from an ambitious and tailored curriculum which meets their individual needs very effectively. Programmes are designed with a close focus on learners chosen careers. Learners wishing to work in hospitality, for example, develop barista and waitering skills as part of their supported internship.

The internship programme enables learners to develop their communication skills and self-confidence to a good standard, allowing them to lead independent or semi-independent lives.

Learners and apprentices learn to use technical and professional vocabulary effectively and show good progress over time. They learn to communicate effectively and precisely. Apprentices in childcare, for example, produce written work that demonstrates a confident and consistent use of technical language. This enables them to fully engage with qualified professionals within childcare settings.

Tutors skilfully use assessment practice to help learners and apprentices improve. Learners and apprentices benefit from timely feedback. This helps learners and apprentices to understand and further improve the standard of their work swiftly. Learners studying carpentry and joinery, for example, act on feedback from tutors to use small hand tools, such as chisels, to make finer alterations to their woodwork projects.

Learners and apprentices develop their critical thinking skills very effectively. Teachers support and encourage them to think logically and ask 'what if' questions to find the best solution to problems. Teachers demonstrate high levels of technical knowledge and use industry standard resources to prepare learners appropriately for the world of work.

Learners studying full-time qualifications develop their character, resilience and independence very well. Additional activities they undertake as part of their wider curriculum include working closely with their local charitable trusts to help raise funds. Learners undertake activities such as working with online retailers to market and create sustainably focused fashion displays with clothes donated by fellow learners. This helps learners to take personal responsibility for improving the lives of others while becoming aware of those less fortunate in society.

Younger learners' attendance in English and mathematics lessons remains low. Teachers and managers work closely with relevant support staff to ensure that any learners or apprentices who routinely miss lessons are challenged and supported to improve. However, this has not yet had sufficient impact. Attendance in vocational lessons is high.

Part-time adult provision is not yet good. Leaders and managers do not plan the curriculum effectively or ensure that teachers establish learners' starting points. As a result, many adults do not realise their ambition of progressing to further studies or securing the right employment opportunity. Learners attending online access to higher education provision do not have the opportunity to practise and apply the essential key skills and professional behaviours they learn about. Teachers do not have a clear understanding of adults' starting points so do not tailor the learning to meet their personalised needs. Learners on English for speakers of other languages do not develop their writing, reading and speaking skills sufficiently. This is because teachers do not routinely and systematically check their understanding and mastery of key concepts.

Teachers and managers do not ensure that adult learners receive effective ongoing careers information, advice and guidance. Teachers rarely promote the central college services or ensure that learners know how to realise their career aspirations. Learners studying full-time qualifications and apprentices benefit from a wide range of information, advice and guidance services while studying. This helps them choose and decide their next steps into education and/or employment.

Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders and managers. They have good oversight of the strengths and areas of development, ensuring that leaders prioritise and focus appropriately. As a result, governors are confident that the quality improvements that leaders prioritise will enhance the learning experience and help learners achieve their educational and employment ambitions.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners and apprentices feel and are safe. They fully understand what constitutes inappropriate and unwanted sexual behaviour, and they are confident to report anything they experience themselves or witness happening to someone else. Learners articulate confidently multiple opportunities and methods of reporting sexual harassment, from direct contact to using up-to-date technology to make anonymous reports.

Learners and apprentices say they feel extremely safe in the college, and they say it is a safe community. They describe a mature and respectful culture where staff are approachable, and their concerns are taken seriously. Apprentices adopt safe working practices and clearly understand the need for careful risk assessments.

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

- Leaders and managers need to ensure that teachers on part-time adult provision plan the curriculum and use learners' starting points effectively. They need to ensure that adult learners make good progress towards achieving their long-term education and training goals.
- Leaders and managers need to ensure that adult learners receive effective ongoing careers education and guidance to help them succeed in their next steps into higher education and work.
- Leaders and managers need to swiftly improve the attendance of young learners in English and mathematics lessons to help them gain the essential employment skills necessary for their future career choices.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130722
<b>Address</b>	London Road Ware Hertfordshire SG12 9JF
<b>Contact number</b>	01992 411 400
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hrc.ac.uk">www.hrc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Tony Medhurst
<b>Provider type</b>	General further education college
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	13–16 March 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	C K Assessment and Training Aspire Training Go Train New Generation Training and Consultancy SPS Training

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal curriculum and quality, 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

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