

# Inspection of Sparsholt College Hampshire

Inspection dates: 10 to 13 October 2023

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

## Information about this provider

Sparsholt College Hampshire is a specialist agricultural and horticultural college with sites in Sparsholt and Andover. On the Sparsholt site, the college offers a broad land-based curriculum including vocational programmes in animal management, horticulture and agriculture. At the Andover site, learners study A-level, T-level or vocational programmes in, for example, construction, computing or business. On both sites, the college offers pathways of study and training for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) for both adults and apprentices.

At the time of inspection, there were approximately 2,790 learners on study programmes, 400 learners on adult learning programmes and 370 apprentices. There were 218 learners in receipt of high needs funding.

The college does not subcontract any provision.

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

Learners are positive about their learning and experience and determined to achieve their potential. Most attend well and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be successful. Learners enjoy their lessons, particularly practical sessions, and they appreciate the high-quality support available.

Learners are well prepared for life and work in modern Britain. They are respectful, polite and tolerant, and they demonstrate the standards of professional conduct that employers value highly.

Many learners pursue their interests, develop their talents and involve themselves positively in the lives of others. Learners studying creative arts teach techniques to local day-care service users. Those studying animal care volunteer to make the college a hedgehog friendly campus, and A-level learners produce films to recognise and celebrate the military wives of Middle Wallop.

Learners enjoy the inclusive environment that staff and leaders have worked hard to establish. They work harmoniously with others; they celebrate difference, and they value those around them. Learners studying focus on life courses teach sign language to students on other courses. Those studying art consider the impact of discrimination in the context of the Windrush generation. Apprentices join learners and staff to celebrate Pride.

Learners build confidence and develop the strategies they need to maintain good mental health. In lessons and work environments, they experiment with their ideas and practise the skills they learn. Learners with high needs develop the skills to advocate for themselves effectively. Well-being practitioners and staff in the well-being hub provide helpful advice and resources, which are highly valued by learners.

Learners quickly learn how to work safely in challenging environments. They take care of one another and are alert to the dangers that working environments present. Learners studying forestry and arboriculture identify risks such as pedestrians, bridleway users and slippery conditions, and they ensure that they take action to keep themselves and others safe.

Learners feel safe at college. They know how to seek support should they need it, and they are confident that staff would act rapidly to resolve any concerns, including bullying, should they occur.

## **Contribution to meeting skills needs**

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders and managers have established and maintain highly effective relationships with employers and stakeholders, both locally and regionally. They use these relationships to respond successfully to the skills needs of the sectors in which they train learners. Staff work closely with employers and stakeholders to ensure the

curriculum is up to date and reflects current industry standards and practices. For example in animal management leaders and managers have planned the curriculum to include the focus of zoos on conservation and species preservation. Learners are taught early in their course about the 'zoo pathway' and the value of zoo attendance figures and collection composition records (ZIMS). This enables them to apply their industry specific knowledge during their work placements.

Leaders use their strong relationships with the Chamber of Commerce, Hampshire County Council, district and borough councils and the Enterprise M3 local enterprise partnership to understand accurately the current and future skills demands of the region. As a result, leaders have introduced new programmes of learning, such as the 'excellence in care' intensive course to support local recruitment into the care profession. They have invested in the Employability and Independence Hubs in response to demand for SEND provision.

Leaders, managers and staff use their relationships with a vast array of employers and stakeholders very well to design and teach the curriculum. Learners benefit from using industry standard equipment, learning current techniques and training in facilities that mirror those in the sector closely. For example, Vistry Construction provides training facilities and resources for ex-military personnel transitioning to employment. Teachers include additional training for T-level adult nursing students based on recommendations from local NHS and private care providers. As such, they are prepared well for work placements.

Leaders work closely with local schools and colleges to ensure that learners have the widest possible opportunities to learn and are prepared well for their next steps. They provide pupils at local schools with helpful information so they can make informed decisions about their futures. They collaborate with other colleges, ensuring that pupils have a broad choice of courses to study. Leaders and staff work collaboratively with the University of Portsmouth to inspire learners to study further, providing them with research opportunities in fisheries and animal behaviour.

Leaders understand in detail the training needs of the wide range of charities and social enterprise projects with which they work. They provide training to the Enham Trust, Andover Guide Dogs for the Blind and the Macular Society in, for example, managing volunteers, managing difficult situations and managing mental health in the workplace.

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

Leaders and managers have designed an ambitious curriculum that aligns closely to the needs of employers and learners. They have a deep understanding of the skills, knowledge and behaviours learners need for their futures. They provide high-quality education and training, which prepares learners effectively for their next steps. Most learners move on successfully to further learning, employment or independent living.

Leaders and teachers have planned learning carefully and thoughtfully to ensure that learners build on what they know and can do. Expert staff use their knowledge and experience well to enable learners to learn and improve. Most learners become more skilful, know more about the subjects they study and adopt industry practices correctly. Learners studying forestry and arboriculture learn to climb trees and attach themselves securely using ropes. They develop competency in their use of chainsaws when on the ground and bring their learning together to prune trees safely at height.

Most teachers use a range of techniques and resources to explain complex concepts successfully. They revisit topics previously taught and often break complicated ideas into smaller, more easily understandable components. Most learners deepen their knowledge and commit what they learn to their long-term memories. Apprentices studying veterinary nursing frequently practise and become proficient in surgical hand preparation. Learners studying T-level adult nursing learn to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation competently.

Most teachers make effective use of assessment to help learners improve. They check learners' understanding carefully to correct misconceptions and identify gaps in learners' knowledge and close these successfully. Teachers provide learners with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. As a result, the standard of most learners' work is high and improving, and most learners make the progress expected of them. In animal care, learners match descriptions of muscle tissue to images, which helps teachers to make assessments of their knowledge and reteach any learning that is not secure. 'A-level chemistry teachers effectively use the 'washing line of misconception', for example learners' misconceptions of the structure of Aspirin were identified. Learners are able to correct their misunderstandings and have a deeper comprehension of the topics, which they apply to further learning.

In education programmes for young people, leaders and teachers are ambitious for all learners, including those with SEND. They promote high expectations and standards, which most learners fulfil well. Most learners acquire new knowledge and skills rapidly and use these competently in different contexts and settings. For example, learners studying sport and outdoor activities use the coaching skills they have learned to teach level 1 learners. Creative arts students learn customer service skills to prepare them for work placements in galleries. Learners with complex needs benefit from work experience and employer encounters with the Andover Leisure Centre and The Bridge Café.

Leaders have not ensured that the standards of teaching in English and mathematics are high enough. As a result, too few learners achieve the grades of which they are capable. Leaders have taken thoughtful action to improve teachers' skills and learners' experience, but it is too early to see if the positive impact of their actions is sustained.

Leaders and managers have designed a purposeful curriculum for adult learners that is relevant to local and regional employment opportunities. Programmes of learning

provide adults with the skills and qualifications they need for work. Most adults complete their studies successfully and progress to employment. Adults studying the Building Heroes programme develop skills and attain professional accreditation that enables them to work in the construction industry.

Teachers use their industry experience effectively to develop the skills and improve the confidence of adults. Teachers provide learners with up-to-date knowledge and opportunities to train using industry standard equipment. As a result, adult learners are prepared well for the world of work. Adults studying forestry and arboriculture learn tree climbing and aerial rescue; they study chainsaw maintenance and know how to use wood chippers and stump grinders competently.

Leaders ensure that the principles of apprenticeships are fulfilled successfully. Staff use initial assessment to construct training plans so that most apprentices learn new skills, knowledge and behaviours rapidly. With employers, staff review regularly the progress that apprentices make. Most apprentices achieve their qualifications as expected, and they secure permanent employment or take on additional responsibilities.

Leaders and managers plan the curriculum for apprentices carefully, ensuring that they benefit from relevant additional qualifications and training. Apprentices studying horticulture complete accreditation to show competence in their use of insecticides. Those training in veterinary nursing learn to prepare injections correctly.

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for learners with high needs. They work very effectively with a wide range of partners and agencies to provide a meaningful curriculum that gives learners the skills and experiences they need for employment and independence. Learners achieve well, and a high proportion move on to further learning, supported internships or employment.

Managers and staff provide learners with SEND with programmes of study that are closely tailored to their needs. Learners gain valuable life skills; they undertake work experience and improve their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, learners visit a local supermarket to experience how the warehouse, home shopping and bakery departments work.

Leaders and managers provide learners with SEND with well-coordinated and highly beneficial support. Staff work closely with learners to develop the academic skills they need, making effective use of assistive technologies. Key workers and well-being practitioners support learners to manage their anxiety and become more confident. Learners are very positive about the support they receive and feel they are making positive progress towards their long-term goals.

Leaders and staff provide learners with a structured programme of impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance. Learners are enabled to make informed decisions about their future careers or learning. Apprentices visit the London Vet Show and attend the Longleat conservation and research medicine conference. Learners studying animal management are provided with additional help

to apply for veterinary courses at university. Learners with high needs visit tourism sites to learn about the work of grounds teams.

Leaders and governors have an extensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and use this knowledge carefully to improve the quality of the education and training they provide. They have developed a supportive teacher continuous development programme. As a result, teachers' development and support activities are highly effective and beneficial in improving performance in almost all cases.

Governance is very effective. Board members are knowledgeable. They use their skills effectively to provide support and challenge to leaders. Governors have a sharp understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of the college, and they ensure that leaders take correct and rapid action in areas of priority.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Pursue determinedly the actions required to further improve English and mathematics.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130698
<b>Address</b>	Westley Lane Sparsholt Winchester Hampshire SO21 2NF
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<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Julie Milburn
<b>Provider type</b>	General further education
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 February 2014
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by Rob Price, 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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