

Inspection of Hartpury College

Inspection dates:

27 February to 1 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Outstanding
Adult learning programmes	Outstanding
Apprenticeships	Outstanding
Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Hartpury College is a specialist sports and land-based college with a rural single-site campus in Gloucestershire. The college shares the campus with Hartpury University. The college provides vocational courses in sport, agriculture, animal management and uniformed protective services. The college also teaches 14 A-level subjects, and GCSEs in English language and mathematics. A small minority of learners and apprentices are studying functional skills in English and mathematics at levels 1 and 2. The college does not provide T Levels or Skills Bootcamps, or work with subcontractors.

Around 2000 learners aged 16 to 18 study on programmes at levels 2 and 3. Around 700 of these learners live on site in the college's residential accommodation. Around 27 learners with high needs study on vocational and A-level programmes.

Around 15 adults study access to higher education courses in land-based or sports science studies, and nine adults study dog grooming at levels 2 and 3.

Around 46 apprentices study the level 2 general farmworker apprenticeship standard and 18 study the level 3 crop technician apprenticeship standard.

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

Learners are very proud to study at Hartpury College. Their behaviour is exemplary and reflects very well the high expectations set by leaders and teachers. Learners attend very well and are punctual to lessons. Learners' excellent conduct contributes to the calm and professional atmosphere in all areas of the college.

Learners are highly motivated by teachers' constant focus on demonstrating and instilling in them the professional behaviours required for the workplace.

Teachers help learners to be involved in community and charitable activities so that they become active citizens. For example, sport teachers collaborate with specialist coaches from the Football Association so that learners gain the skills to adapt coaching techniques for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The women's football team donates gift boxes to the Samaritans to distribute to people in crisis; the men's football teams raise money to improve the lives of sick and disabled children in Gloucestershire.

Almost all learners and apprentices study additional qualifications beyond their main qualification. This helps them to gain new knowledge and skills and improve their employability. For example, agriculture learners complete qualifications in welding, chainsaw operation and safe use of pesticides. Sport learners study for leadership, gym instructing and nutritional qualifications.

Learners and apprentices very much enjoy taking part in the excellent range of sport, health and fitness activities. Leaders ensure that sport, fitness and enrichment programmes are inclusive and cater for the ability and interest levels of all learners. Recreational sports teams provide every learner with the opportunity to participate in sport.

Learners and apprentices enjoy participating in the college's extensive 'Hartpury Active' health and fitness initiative. Many learners take part in the college's wide range of social clubs and arts, crafts and cultural classes.

Learners and apprentices are very well prepared by teachers for their careers or further study. All learners receive high-quality individualised careers information, advice and guidance. Staff provide a comprehensive programme of guest speakers. For example, agriculture learners receive talks from organisations specialising in livestock genetics, nature conservation, crop and grain marketing.

Learners take part in high-quality, purposeful work placements that deepen their knowledge of their chosen careers and improve their skills and confidence. Sport learners undertake coaching roles in schools to organise fitness activities for younger children. Animal management learners complete placements in animal sanctuaries in veterinary clinics and kennels where they learn about the care of a wide range of animals. Sport and uniformed protective services learners receive excellent practical teaching from visiting Royal Marine Commandos on how to prepare and cook healthy meals.

Learners and apprentices feel safe when studying at college. They know how to recognise coercive behaviours and how to safely intervene if they see this happening. Teachers skilfully facilitate discussions about sensitive topics so that learners are equipped well to live safe and healthy lives. Teachers ensure that learners studying sport have an excellent knowledge of the risks and consequences of online gambling in sport and how addictions can develop.

Learners and apprentices are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, teachers ensure that apprentices studying the general farm worker apprenticeship are aware of the modern challenges farmers face.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders work very effectively with a large range of stakeholders, including community groups such as Gloucester City Farm and the Hollie Gazzard Trust, and employers such as Tallis Amos Group, Western Arable Services, Three Counties Vets, Woburn Safari Park, Team GB Sports and the Football Association. Managers use the insights they gain from stakeholders to inform their investment in the resources that will provide learners with useful knowledge and skills. For example, senior staff in consultation with employers in the sports and leisure industries, identified a skills gap in employees' ability to build a rapport with clients. In response to this, staff added communication training to sports curriculums so that learners can practise and refine these skills.

Senior staff work exceptionally well with the Employer Representative Body, Business West, and the Federation of Small Businesses to understand the needs of employers, almost all of whom are small- and medium-sized enterprises. Leaders have responded very effectively to employers' requests for learners to gain employability skills such as written and verbal communication, presentation skills and how to be resilient at work. Staff work closely with small business partners to provide learners with the skills and knowledge to work on a self-employed basis. For example, using the expertise of small business owners in the college's Tech Box Park to teach learners about wealth planning, to read financial data and to create enterprise proposals. Leaders have invested heavily in capital and physical resources to meet gaps in digital skills in agriculture identified by strategic stakeholders and strategies such as, for example, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Employer Representative Bodies, the Local Skills Improvement Plan, and the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.

Staff work closely with Gloucestershire local authority to ensure that learners with high needs, and those who receive support for their learning, are supported very well as they transition into the college and between courses. Leaders carefully align the college's further education curriculums to courses at Hartpury University. For

example, staff introduced more science content into further education sports courses, as recommended by university staff, so that learners have the scientific knowledge they need to study at a higher level.

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

Staff are highly aspirational for learners and apprentices and have very high expectations of what they can achieve. This includes learners with high needs and those with SEND, who achieve at least as well as their peers.

Leaders consult widely with staff, apprentices and learners on well-being, facilities, and the quality of the courses they provide. They respond quickly to make improvements. For example, feedback from learners with high needs resulted in leaders relocating learning support facilities to create a new zone at the college's commercial farm.

Managers provide a very broad range of continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities for staff. These link closely to the college's quality cycle and the strengths and areas for improvement identified. A strong CPD focus on pedagogy includes training on sequencing curriculums, questioning and the use of initial assessment. Staff in agriculture and animal care undertake training in rough terrain telehandlers, cross-cutting chainsaw operation and nutritional management for dogs. Staff also gain knowledge of working with learners with SEND and high needs.

Leaders implement a thorough and highly effective quality improvement process. Leaders know the strengths and the few areas for improvement in the college's quality of education and take highly effective remedial actions.

Leaders work well to create a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive culture. Staff react quickly if learners raise concerns. Female and LGBTQ+ learners feel safe and comfortable because they have excellent support from staff, including the knowledgeable well-being team. Leaders have introduced 'active bystander' training for learners to help to raise their awareness of what is acceptable behaviour, and when and how to report something that does not feel right.

Teachers sequence curriculums very effectively so that learners and apprentices build their knowledge, skills, and behaviours securely over time. They plan the theoretical and practical elements skilfully, so that learners and apprentices apply their learning and skills effectively in practical activities and in work. For example, learners on equine courses learn about different types of tack and how to fit these correctly. Learners studying animal care at level 2 are taught animal handling skills at the college, which they then go on to use in a variety of workplace settings such as wildlife parks, dog spas, veterinary centres, and kennels. Teachers of learners

with high needs build their skills very well over time, taking account of their individual needs and preferred learning strategies.

Teachers coordinate apprentices' on- and off-the-job training with employers very effectively so that apprentices swiftly practise and master new knowledge and skills. For example, general farmworker apprentices who want to learn about rationing animal feed shadow senior farmworkers in the workplace until they can complete this task independently. Teachers ensure that apprentices recognise potential hazards in the workplace and learn how to conduct risk assessments. Teachers plan training so that apprentices gain new knowledge about biodiversity, animal health and the safety of livestock, training in vehicle operation and environmental concerns.

Teachers are highly qualified. Nearly all teachers have current or recent industry experience that they use very well to enliven and enrich their learning. For example, uniformed protective services learners learn from a serving police constable about the importance of fundamental British values, dignity and respect when dealing with prisoners or when making an arrest. Teachers make excellent use of external specialists so that learners develop knowledge of current industry practice and are well informed in readiness for careers.

Teachers plan activities to ensure that learners and apprentices develop their knowledge deeply and securely. They provide plentiful opportunities for recapping and practising so that learners apply theoretical knowledge to practical settings very well. For example, agriculture learners and apprentices refine their combine harvester and tractor driving skills very effectively by using high-quality digital vehicle simulators. Sport and exercise science teachers use research activities and presentations to challenge learners to apply their knowledge and understanding to their chosen sport of interest. Teachers of learners with high needs help them to remember important knowledge. For example, they frequently contextualise new theoretical content in a variety of workplace settings to help learners relate what they learn to practical examples.

Teachers use questioning and assessment strategies very effectively. They build on knowledge by presenting learners and apprentices with increasingly challenging questions and scenarios. For example, in sport and exercise science, learners use their prior knowledge of psychology to reflect on what are the prime influences on education and crime. As a result, learners confidently identify how role models are key influencers.

Nearly all learners and apprentices successfully complete courses and achieve well. Almost all learners with high needs who study level 2 courses move on to level 3 studies at the college. Nearly all adult access to higher education students successfully gains a place at university. Apprentices are highly valued by their employers. For example, employers are impressed by how crop technician apprentices use what they have learned to advise them on soil quality.

Learners and apprentices' practical skills and written work are of a very high standard. The content of the work is nearly always above the expected level and

typically demonstrates the fluent use of technical language. Learners and apprentices have high levels of practical skill and dexterity. For example, general farmworker apprentices have a thorough understanding of essential pre-start safety checks before using farm machinery. Learners studying agriculture use information technology well to format and present their work.

Governors are experienced and understand accurately the changes and challenges affecting the college. They support and challenge leaders well. Leaders provide governors with frequent and detailed performance information. Governors are clear on the strategic direction of the college and its contribution to local, regional and national skills gaps. They understand well the detail of curriculum developments and they know how well curriculum areas are performing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	146555
Address	Hartpury University and Hartpury College Hartpury House Gloucester GL19 3BE
Contact number	01452 702 100
Website	www.hartpury.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Andrew Collop
Provider type	Specialist Land-Based College
Date of previous inspection	May 2018
Main subcontractors	No subcontractors

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal further education, 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

Cliff Shaw, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Flint	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Houghton	His Majesty's Inspector
Roger Pilgrim	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Attfield	Ofsted Inspector
Nikki Sendell	Ofsted Inspector
John O'Connell	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Alexander	His Majesty's Inspector
Hannah Staddon	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Wardle	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
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