

Inspection of Havant and South Downs College

Inspection dates: 21 to 24 May 2024

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	Outstanding
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Havant and South Downs College (HSDC) is a general further education college located in Hampshire with campuses in Waterlooville, Havant and Alton. The Havant campus provides a broad range of A levels. The South Downs campus provides an extensive programme of vocational courses, including T levels and apprenticeships. The Alton campus provides a range of A levels and vocational programmes. Leaders developed the HSDC Alton independence hub with Hampshire County Council to provide specialist provision for young people with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The hub includes a fully adapted kitchen, a sensory garden and sensory room.

The college offers a wide range of programmes from entry level to level 6. The vast majority of young people study A level or vocational programmes in subjects including business, science and health and social care. Learners also study T levels in areas such as construction, health and engineering. Adult learners study programmes from entry level to level 5, such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), counselling, distance learning courses and a small range of community learning programmes. Apprentices study apprenticeships from level 2 to

6, including early years and engineering. Part time 14- to 16-year-olds study a range of vocational programmes such as animal care, early years and functional skills mathematics and English. Learners with high needs study a range of programmes such as preparing for adulthood and skills for independence.

At the time of inspection there were approximately 4,200 learners studying education programmes for young people, 1,800 adult learners, 330 apprentices, of which 90 are 16-to-18 years old. There were approximately 100 learners aged 14-16 studying the school links programme and 155 learners in receipt of high needs funding.

The college works with one subcontractor, Tempus Training Limited, to provide the construction skills certification scheme (CSCS card) for adult learners. The college was last inspected in March 2020, where inspectors judged overall effectiveness as good.

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

Learners and apprentices benefit from a positive and purposeful learning environment in which most rightly feel well supported. Adult learners develop positive attitudes to learning and high standards of professional behaviour. Most learners and apprentices appreciate and value the mutual respect between each other and staff. They enjoy their course and feel part of a caring college community. Consequently, most learners and apprentices attend well and are motivated to achieve.

Learners studying education programmes for young people benefit from sessions where teachers bring activity to life and provide relevance, by promoting discussions and relating teaching to real-life scenarios. Level 1 vocational studies learners at Alton benefit from lessons that prepare them for employment in industries such as social care, horticulture and hospitality. T level in health learners benefit from well-planned industry placements where they practise their communication skills and observe interactions with patients. Level 3 sports learners at South Downs learn about working safely and body systems to help them coach others. Consequently, most learners and apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need for their future. They can apply their learning in class and in the workplace effectively.

Adult learners are passionate about their learning. They engage well with the interesting and challenging lessons that teachers provide, and which are closely aligned to learners' needs. This contributes to the adult learners' rapid progress in the subjects they study, and they achieve exceptionally well as a result. Teachers support learners to play a full role in their community. Teachers prepare learners very well for their next step in learning or work.

Apprentices value the subject expertise of their work-based trainers. They appreciate how trainers contextualise their learning, so they quickly develop new skills that they apply in the workplace. Commis chef apprentices rightly value the practical demonstrations their teachers provide, including how to cater for different dietary requirements, such as those determined by faith and religion. As a result, most apprentices are well prepared for their final assessments and most achieve well.

Learners and apprentices grow in confidence and develop resilience very well because of their time at college. Most learners who fall behind or have barriers to their learning benefit from effective support, including through the college 'Back on Track' programme that helps them build resilience and achieve their goals. Level 3 early years educator apprentices become self-assured and contribute to the workplace well, they confidently plan activities for children and discuss children's progress with parents and carers. Performing arts learners benefit from useful critiques of their performance. This helps learners to refine their skills and build their resilience to the personal judgements and rejections they will encounter in the industry.

Learners and apprentices feel safe while at college and in the workplace. T-level construction learners understand and apply health and safety practice in the construction sector. Learners know who to speak to if they have any concerns about themselves or their peers. Most learners trust staff and are confident that they will respond to concerns quickly. Adult learners demonstrate a secure understanding of risks in their communities, for example online grooming and radicalisation, and how they can keep themselves and their peers safe.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

College leaders, governors and staff engage very effectively with a broad range of stakeholders. They are highly aware of and responsive to the needs of their area as articulated in the local skills improvement plan and their external partners. Stakeholders describe college staff as highly trusted partners whose role is one of 'real substance'.

Leaders work with partners to understand and influence local and regional strategic skills policy very successfully. Stakeholders value highly college leaders' contribution to steering groups and project boards, including the Solent Skills Advisory Panel and the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board. Leaders play a pivotal role in the identification of emerging skills needs in sectors such as engineering, aerospace and healthcare. College staff work collaboratively with local education and training providers to offer the best provision to meet local and regional community needs.

Leaders and managers work effectively with partners, including the Portsmouth Virtual School, Treloar's School and Link Up Leigh Park, to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged members of the community. This includes comprehensive support for care experienced learners, and those who have high needs or live in areas of high deprivation. Leaders have developed effective relationships with a network of colleges, employers and local authorities, including Hampshire Achieves and Shaping Portsmouth.

Leaders and managers engage proactively with stakeholders to contribute to the skills needs of specialist sectors. For example, leaders and managers have worked diligently with universities and specialist sector bodies such as Space South Central and the UK Space Agency. Leaders work with large employers, such as Airbus, to provide staff with industry update training where they showcase how they use highly specialist equipment. They also arrange for students to attend taster weeks at the business. This impacts positively on learners, for example mathematicians become more employable as they develop their higher-level problem-solving skills.

Teachers and trainers frequently involve a range of stakeholders, including employers, sector specialist bodies, universities, the local authority, schools and alumni, in the planning, teaching and assessment of the curriculum well. Learners and apprentices across curriculum areas and campuses benefit from learning up-to-date knowledge and industry-specific skills.

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

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision to raise learners' and apprentices' aspirations and improve their life chances through high-quality education and training. They collaborate closely with stakeholders to design courses that enable learners and apprentices to make good progress in their academic and personal lives. For example, staff work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to offer online construction courses to those furthest from work to gain valuable employment skills. Staff tailor courses carefully and support learners and apprentices, including those with additional needs, to become more confident, resilient and independent.

Staff plan learning logically so that learners and apprentices build knowledge and skills over time securely. For example, A-level mathematics learners at the Alton and Havant campus begin by recapping problem-solving and algebra, before developing these concepts further in pure mathematics and mechanics. T-level health teachers carefully order learning in practical sessions, so that learners first learn how to make up a hospital bed, and then how to communicate with patients, before they interact with patient mannequins to take observations. Consequently, learners and apprentices develop the essential knowledge and skills they need to achieve their qualifications well.

Learners and apprentices benefit from skilled and experienced teachers. Level 4 engineering work-based trainers at South Downs use their teaching and coaching skills effectively to support apprentices to achieve well. They plan helpful individual training sessions to help learners and apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours which they successfully apply in their job roles. Teachers on level 2 travel and tourism at South Downs use their industry experience to help learners understand the demands of working in the sector. Consequently, learners and apprentices are familiar with current industry practices and are well prepared for work.

Most teachers use assessment well. They use questioning effectively to check learners' and apprentices' understanding and promote further learning. Most teachers intervene appropriately to explain and any mistakes that learners make. English functional skills teachers at Havant use varied methods to check learners' understanding and tackle any inaccuracies. This means that learners are confident to contribute to discussion and share their ideas. Level 3 sports teachers at Alton and South Downs help learners practice what they have learned so that they develop confidence in applying their knowledge to different scenarios.

Most learners and apprentices benefit from feedback to help them improve their work. However, a small number of teachers do not consistently correct mistakes in learners' writing, so do not support learners to further develop their literacy skills.

Teachers and learning support assistants build on what learners with high needs already know through effective use of recall. For example, they take photos of

activities, trips and projects and ask learners to recall the knowledge, skills and behaviours they used so that they can develop further. Staff use a range of interesting and up-to-date resources to support learners, including specialist resources such as assistive technology, for example eye gaze systems and read/write applications on laptops. This enables learners to access all elements of the curriculum well. Staff use assessment effectively, particularly questioning, to identify knowledge and plan for learning. They extend questioning to challenge learners to think more independently. However, a small number of staff do not track the progress of learners with high needs effectively. As a result, these learners do not benefit consistently from more-challenging targets to extend the development of their knowledge, skills and behaviours further.

Most teachers support learners and apprentices to develop the technical and professional language used in industry. T-Level construction learners at the South Downs campus use terms such as datum levels, elevation, and dimensions when constructing 2D and 3D drawings in computer aided design correctly. Consequently, learners and apprentices are prepared well for when they enter the workplace.

Teachers help adult learners to develop the literacy, numeracy and language skills they need to better integrate into the community and become more independent. Teachers of ESOL at the Havant campus support adult learners skilfully to use language that will be required in a variety of situations. They teach learners to recognise the important differences between informal and formal language and when each is most appropriate to use.

Most learners and apprentices produce work to the required standard or better. Most learners and apprentices achieve their learning goals. Level 4 engineering apprentices take part in challenging and useful projects that help them demonstrate their new knowledge and skills. Adult learners studying Access to Higher Education produce well researched and appropriately referenced academic essays to a high standard.

Learners and apprentices are supported well to achieve high grades, which many do, and most progress into positive destinations. Leaders rightly recognise that too many commis chef and early years educator apprentices leave their apprenticeship before their final assessments. Leaders have taken positive steps to address this, but it is too early to see the full impact.

Staff provide learners and apprentices with opportunities to participate in a wide range of clubs, societies and special interest groups such as the debating society. A small number of learners take part in activities which contribute positively to their communities, such as charity work and volunteering as part of the college 'Be Extraordinary' initiative. For example, commis chef apprentices participate in community activities such as 'have dinner on us' for 1,200 university students during examinations. However, not all learners are aware of this offer, which limits their ability to participate.

Learners benefit from a comprehensive tutorial programme that covers key topics such as the college's values of kindness, respect, inclusion and success, plus other useful themes such as safeguarding and British values. Tutors also talk to learners about issues such as healthy relationships, consent, domestic violence and coercive behaviour sensitively. For example, learners discuss scenarios, which enables them to carefully and safely consider how they would react in different situations. Although the tutorial programme covers the risks of radicalisation and extremism, learners' understanding of these risks, and how they relate to their lives, is too inconsistent.

Most learners and apprentices benefit from appropriate careers guidance that supports them to make well-informed choices for their future learning or work. They benefit from visiting speakers, which adds to their understanding of the chosen industries that they are preparing to work in. Staff work successfully with disadvantaged learners to raise their aspirations. Many learners progress to higher education as a result.

Leaders support staff well to complete a wide range of professional development opportunities to further improve their teaching practice and support the learners they work with. Staff value training on topics such as cognitive science, trauma informed practice and behaviour management strategies. Specialist staff provide teachers with valuable training to support care experienced learners and those with additional needs. This contributes to most staff teaching engaging lessons that help learners and apprentices make good progress.

Well-informed governors provide leaders with strong challenge, support and strategic direction. They share leaders' passion for inclusivity and high ambitions for all learners, particularly those who are disadvantaged. They monitor gaps in performance between different groups of learners closely, holding leaders to account to resolve issues that are identified.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Continue to make sure that all apprentices achieve their qualifications successfully and in a timely manner.
- Make sure that all learners participate in additional activities available to them through the college so that they benefit from opportunities to further develop their personal and social interests.
- Make sure teachers of learners with high needs track the progress they make to enable them to further develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130695
Address	College Road Waterlooville Hampshire PO7 8AA
Contact number	02393 879999
Website	www.hsdac.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Mike Gaston
Provider type	General further education
Date of previous inspection	10 to 13 March 2020
Main subcontractors	Tempus Training Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal, 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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