



Hartpury College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

Published
May 2006

Provider reference
130687

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Hartpury College
Type of college:	Specialist, land-based further education college
Principal:	Malcolm Wharton
Address of college:	Hartpury House, Hartpury, Nr Gloucester, GL19 3BE
Telephone number:	01452 702100
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Chair of governors:	Mark Davison
Unique reference number:	130687
Name of lead inspector:	Sean Hanan, HMI
Dates of inspection:	27-31 March 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Hartpury College is located some five miles north-west of the city of Gloucester. It is a large land-based further education college with about 1,100 learners on full-time further education programmes. An associate faculty of the University of the West of England provides for a further 1,100 learners studying on foundation degree, honours degree and masters programmes. The college recruits a significant proportion of its learners from outside Gloucestershire, including from overseas. Around 90% of further education learners on full-time programmes are aged 16 to 18. Most of them are on full-time vocational courses. About 5% are on work-based learning programmes. The area has low levels of social deprivation and unemployment. In 2004/05, about 2% of full-time learners at the college were from a minority ethnic background, compared to 1% in the local population.
2. The college offers first and national diplomas, national award and national certificate programmes, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and specialised vocational qualifications. Courses are offered at levels 1, 2 and 3 in agriculture, game-keeping, countryside, horticulture, animal care, veterinary nursing, and equine studies together with sport, leisure and information technology. The college also provides vocational land-based education for learners with a moderate learning difficulty or behavioural difficulty. There are about 50 pupils from five local schools involved in 14 to 16 collaborative provision, in engineering and land-based subjects.
3. Annual income is about £18m. Some £33m has been invested in physical resources over the past nine years. A new sports academy building was completed in February 2005 and includes a sports hall, squash court, gymnasias, facilities for sports therapy, aqua therapy and fitness testing, together with sports science teaching areas. These facilities are complemented by additional sports pitches and specialist shooting and fencing areas for the Modern Pentathlon Academy. The new Animal Science Centre was completed in August 2005 and includes classrooms, offices and laboratories and a new student services centre. The college is part of a tri-region Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in equine education and training and is developing a CoVE for Food and Drink in the South West with another college.
4. The college's mission is: "Hartpury College is committed to making available relevant, effective, high quality education and training for land-based, sports and allied industries locally, regionally, nationally and internationally; to increase participation in learning and skills transfer; to ensure accessibility of all college services and to ensure viability of the college and its programmes".

Scope of the inspection

5. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:
- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
 - achievements and standards
 - quality of provision
 - leadership and management

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: grade 2

Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

6. Hartpury College is a forward looking and dynamic land-based college. Provision has expanded considerably during the past 10 years and the college has diversified into new curriculum areas, built new accommodation and improved the facilities for learners. It is an effective, inclusive and increasingly diverse learning community, catering for learners studying at level 1 through to post-graduate qualifications. Behaviour and attendance are very good. People and the environment are treated with respect. Learners' achievements are good overall and have improved since the last inspection. The achievements of work-based learners are satisfactory.
7. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is rigorous and support for learners' additional needs is outstanding. Learners generally work hard and make good progress in lessons. There is insufficient attention given to the needs of more able learners in a minority of lessons and the use of information learning technology (ILT) is under-developed in some lessons. Teaching accommodation is generally of a high standard and is well used, although insufficient attention is paid to the general standards of maintenance of some practical facilities. Substantial investment continues to be made in new specialist resources and updating existing provision. Support and guidance for learners are outstanding.
8. Leadership and management are good. Strategic management is strong and quality assurance procedures are robust. Governors are well informed and monitor the academic and financial performance of the college carefully. Management information is comprehensive and effective. Financial management is good. Overall, the college provides good value for money.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

9. The college's capacity to improve is good. Success rates have improved steadily over the past three years and are mostly above those for similar colleges. They are improving but remain low in key skills and work-based learning. Poorly performing courses are quickly identified and appropriate actions are taken. The quality of teaching and learning is rigorously monitored and the outcomes of lesson observation are broadly accurate.
10. Leadership and management remain strong and financial management is good. Quality assurance is good and course review and self-assessment procedures are generally effective. The college's self-assessment report for 2004/05 is mainly accurate. There are, however, insufficiently clear identifications of key strengths and areas for improvement in curriculum

areas, particularly those relating to learners' achievements and teaching and learning.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

11. The college has made good progress in promoting improvements since the last inspection in 2002. All the key weaknesses identified then have been addressed. Provision at level 1 and opportunities for part-time study have increased. Improvements have been made to the management and performance of work-based learning. Key skills teaching and success rates have improved, but remain low. Health and safety procedures are more consistently applied, although risk assessments do not extend to ICT and some teaching accommodation. The promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity have been significantly improved.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- An effective learning community
- High achievement rates for most learners
- Good strategic planning and management
- Good teaching and learning
- High quality specialist resources
- Effective quality assurance arrangements
- Outstanding support and guidance for learners
- Comprehensive and effective management information

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- The achievements of work-based learners
- The identification of key strengths and areas for improvement in curriculum self-assessment
- Standards of maintenance and working practice in some areas do not reflect current industry best practice

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

12. Learners make good progress and achieve high standards on the majority of courses. Standards achieved by learners on animal care courses are particularly high. Learners enjoy their studies and behave very well. They develop good practical skills that are relevant to their future employment and pay due regard to health and safety. Skills for life are well developed in the provision for learners with learning difficulties.
13. Overall success rates have been improving steadily over the past three years. Learners aged 16 to 18 achieve well at all levels of study. There has been a significant rise in the number of learners studying at level 1 since the last inspection and their success rates exceed the national average for similar colleges. At level 2, success rates are around the national average and at level 3, they exceed the national average by 7%. More adults succeed on their courses at all levels than is the case in similar colleges. The achievements of work-based learners are improving but remain low. Provision for key skills has been re-organised since the last inspection and they are integrated into learners' main qualifications. Pass rates for most key skills are improving but remain low.
14. A high proportion of learners complete their course and a good proportion pass the qualification. More learners have remained on their courses in 2005/06 than at the same time in the previous year. Attendance at lessons is very good. The attendance rate during the last two academic years has been almost 90%, well above the average for similar colleges. Progression rates into employment and higher education are high. A good number of learners remain at the college to follow higher education courses.
15. Learners make the most of all the college has to offer them and many have received external recognition and college awards for their work. An annual awards evening is held to celebrate success. There is good participation in enrichment activities provided for the learners. The college is an effective learning community and learners contribute through charity work, social and sporting activities.

Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

16. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Support for new teachers is effective and peer observations are used to encourage the sharing of good practice. Overall, the college's observation profile for 2004/05 shows steady improvement in the proportion of good or better teaching since the last inspection in 2002.

17. Teachers have particularly good industrial and vocational experience which they utilise effectively to make learning realistic and relevant. In most lessons learners work diligently and enjoy their work. The progress they make is at least satisfactory and usually better. Lesson objectives are clear, involve learners in frequent changes of activity and learners are encouraged to make effective use of their previous experiences and knowledge. In a minority of lessons there are insufficient strategies to ensure that more able learners are appropriately challenged. The college has identified this as an area for improvement. The use of ILT is underdeveloped in some lessons.
18. The college provides outstanding support to meet learners' additional needs. Communications between learning support staff and the curriculum staff are excellent. Learning support assistants are used effectively to provide support in lessons. Assignments are rigorously moderated and regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflect current industry practice and meet the requirements of awarding bodies. Assessment decisions are accurate and there is a thorough system of internal moderation to ensure that standards are consistent and are maintained. Assessment for work-based learners has improved since the last inspection. Learners are assessed more regularly and employers are more involved in the training programme. The teaching of key skills has also improved. Learners work in small groups at the appropriate level with good specialist support. However, vocational teachers do not always make the best use of opportunities to use and develop learners' key skills during lessons.
19. Teaching accommodation is generally of a high standard and is well used. Some practical teaching resources, such as the new sports facilities, the equine yard and the dairy, are outstanding. Practical resources and accommodation for horticulture are of lower quality. The college has recognised this and improvements form part of the accommodation strategy. There is insufficient attention paid to general standards of maintenance of some practical facilities, including the dairy unit. Some working practices on the equine teaching yard and commercial livery yard do not reflect current best practice. There are insufficient computers, particularly for those learners who wish to work on assignments outside normal college hours.
20. Parents and carers are kept well informed. They are encouraged to attend taster days and initial guidance interviews. Progress reports are produced each term and tutors contact the parents or carers of any learners aged 16 to 18 who are identified as causing concern.
21. Educational and social inclusion is good. The college is an inclusive and increasingly diverse community. The choice of courses is well matched to the needs and the interests of learners. Considerable efforts are taken to accommodate learners' needs and to engage employers. The range of level 2 and level 3 programmes is wide and varied. The college offers five

programmes at level 1 and one programme at entry level. There is also a good range of programmes for 14 to 16 year old pupils from local schools.

22. Effective open days for both full-time and work-based learners are held regularly. Publicity materials promote the success of non-traditional learners. Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Learners on most vocational courses benefit from links with local employers. All curriculum areas have vocational panels which provide a forum to address changing industry requirements and good opportunities for employers to identify their training needs. However, a minority are under-developed with little employer participation. Employers also support the college by providing excellent work experience opportunities and by attending the college to give talks on a variety of curriculum topics.
23. Enrichment activities are varied and well attended. Sporting options are excellent and learners' membership of the college's gym is high. Other opportunities are available within curriculum areas, such as trips and visits, although non-sports options are limited in the main time of the week that is programmed for these activities. In many areas, learners are able to take additional qualifications such as first aid, health and safety and sports awards to extend their learning. Enrichment and tutorial opportunities together contribute well to learners staying safe and healthy.
24. Learners receive outstanding guidance and support for their studies. Prospective learners benefit from extensive pre-course advice and guidance which enable them to make informed programme and accommodation choices. The college has an excellent website and a clear and informative prospectus, which is also available as a talking prospectus and in Braille. Most learners have the opportunity to participate in a taster week where they are able to gain a more detailed understanding of their proposed programme of study. Some course handbooks lack concise information on subject content and assessment.
25. Learners adjust quickly to the college environment supported by a well planned induction programme. There are strong support systems that promote and facilitate academic achievement. Teachers work closely with the additional support team and refer learners for support where necessary. However, part-time learners do not always accept the offer of additional learning support. Tutors set clear expectations for attendance and work rate. They effectively monitor and review learners' progress. The tutorial programme is relevant to learners' needs and encourages them to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle. Individual tutorials are organised at least twice per term. Tutorials are used effectively to support vulnerable learners. For example, in the equine area, 'super tutors' have been appointed to provide further support for learners who are finding it difficult to adjust to living away from home. The setting of individuals' learning goals for part-time learners is inconsistent.

26. There is an extensive range of support services available that includes counsellors, a college nurse, a chaplaincy service and highly effective residential wardens. The college's careers guidance and education service, supported by Connexions, provides good support for learners' economic wellbeing, by effectively supporting learners' applications for employment and further study.

Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

27. Leadership and management are good. The principal provides strong leadership to sustain the development of the college and to pursue a clear strategic direction. Communications are good and staff at all levels work well together to support learners. Since the last inspection in 2002, success rates have continued to improve and are at or above those for similar colleges. Management information is comprehensive and used effectively. Financial and risk management are very good. A diverse range of income is managed well to extend opportunities for learners. The college provides good value for money.
28. Governors are well informed, agree challenging targets with the principal and monitor academic and financial performance of the college carefully. They are well supported by the clerk to the corporation and receive regular training. They support the college well in developing and maintaining a range of effective strategic partnerships including that with the University of the West of England. Governors have an appropriate range of experience though some groups, including women, are currently under represented.
29. Teachers have appropriate vocational experience and new teachers are well supported. A low proportion holds teaching qualifications although many recently recruited staff are being supported to work towards them. Previously very high staff turnover has been reduced over the last two years. Good opportunities for personal development and vocational updating are provided to support the college's strategic objectives. Substantial investment continues to be made in new specialist resources and updating existing provision. Most specialist resources are of high quality and are well used. The standard of routine maintenance of general teaching accommodation in a minority of vocational areas is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient ILT resources to support learning.
30. Quality assurance procedures are good. Quality assurance of assessment is particularly strong. Lessons are observed regularly by internal and external observers. Generally, the grades awarded accurately reflect the quality of lessons. Good support is provided to teachers to continue to raise standards of teaching and learning. Course review and self-assessment procedures are mostly effective. There is, however, insufficiently clear identification of key

strengths and areas for improvement in curriculum areas, particularly those relating to learners' achievements and teaching and learning.

31. The college has made good progress in complying with the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Disability Act 2002 and the Disability Discrimination Act. Provision for learners with disabilities is good. In response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 the college has produced an appropriate race equality policy and action plan and has made very good progress in their implementation. Analysis of learners' performance by age, gender and ethnicity is satisfactory. Staff awareness of equality of opportunity has been raised significantly since the last inspection. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are good and governors and senior staff have received appropriate training. Procedures for vetting staff and work placement providers are appropriate.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	02/03	474	62	61	0	162	60	51	+9
	03/04	783	57	62	-5	162	56	49	+6
	04/05	515	65	62	+3	159	69	49	+20
NVQs	02/03	59	71	63	+8	7	86	60	+26
	03/04	63	84	71	+13	3	67	60	+7
	04/05	26	96	71	+25	4	75	60	+15
Other	02/03	416	61	61	0	155	59	50	+9
	03/04	720	54	61	-7	159	55	49	+7
	04/05	489	63	61	+2	155	69	49	+20

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	02/03	487	48	58	-11	131	40	55	-15
	03/04	319	51	62	-11	174	52	54	-2
	04/05	220	62	62	0	182	64	54	+10
NVQs	02/03	246	38	36	+2	37	22	45	-23
	03/04	65	49	41	+8	38	63	43	+20
	04/05	66	65	41	+24	21	43	43	0
Other	02/03	241	58	62	-5	94	48	57	-9
	03/04	254	52	64	-12	136	49	56	-7
	04/05	154	61	64	-3	161	67	56	+11

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
3 Long	02/03	356	68	63	+5	263	38	45	-7
	03/04	445	70	65	+5	132	42	48	-6
	04/05	557	72	65	+7	150	63	48	+15
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	249	74	60	+14	32	56	50	+6
	03/04	43	72	45	+27	2	0		
	04/05	16	56	62	-6	2	100		
NVQs	02/03	0				4	25	36	-11
	03/04	0				30	20	39	-19
	04/05	0				12	50	39	+11
Other	02/03	107	54	69	-14	227	35	46	-11
	03/04	402	70	66	+3	100	49	50	-1
	04/05	541	73	67	+6	136	64	49	+15

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2004 to 2005

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	30	40	32	53	47
	Advanced	7	29	31	29	48
2004/05	Apprenticeship	29	48	38	55	50
	Advanced	3	67	34	100	48

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

b) Timely success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	33	21	16	27	24
	Advanced	7	14	19	14	30
2004/05	Apprenticeship	29	31	21	34	29
	Advanced	7	29	21	29	31

* The number of learners who planned to complete their learning programme in the given year

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'