

Hartpury College

Specialist further education college

Inspection dates

1–4 May 2018

Overall effectiveness			Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding	16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding		
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Learners on all programmes and courses receive high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders have created a highly supportive, respectful and collaborative culture in which learners thrive, raise their ambitions and gain vastly in confidence.
- Leaders and managers have successfully dealt with weaknesses identified by inspectors during the previous inspection.
- A very high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications, including good grades in GCSE English and mathematics.
- Teachers make extremely effective use of their industry and sporting expertise to inspire learners to achieve excellence.
- As a result of managers' expertly designed curriculum, sports learners develop their sporting prowess alongside achieving qualifications.
- Excellent relationships with a wide range of equine, agricultural, animal management and sports industries ensure that learners develop specialist skills rapidly. Many go on to secure and sustain employment.
- Learners develop excellent practical skills and produce high-quality work. Current learners are highly positive about their experiences and making rapid progress.
- All learners participate in excellent and highly relevant external work placements. These develop learners' readiness for work and knowledge of their chosen careers exceptionally well.
- Learners' excellent attitudes and pride in their work contributes significantly to the outstanding progress they make.
- Careers advice is impartial, comprehensive and highly effective. The large majority of learners go on to university or employment related to their courses.
- Staff provide excellent support to all learners which ensures that their academic, vocational and personal needs are met extremely well.
- In a small number of A-level subjects, some learners do not achieve the grades of which they are capable.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Hartpury College is a specialist sports and land-based college on a rural, single-site campus in Gloucestershire. Most learners who attend the college are from Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Learners also come from elsewhere in the UK, including Northern Ireland and Scotland. Most live in residential accommodation on the campus. Around a quarter of the learners following further education courses come from areas of economic deprivation. A small number of learners follow apprenticeships in agriculture, or in sporting excellence in rugby, rowing or equine. Sporting excellence apprenticeships are designed to develop talented young sports people to elite levels and do not require employment.
- Adults from across the UK undertake short sports coaching courses in rugby or football through two specialist subcontractors to the college.
- Hartpury College also has a large higher education (HE) provision, and a small number of international learners from the European Union and further afield.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching and assessment on a small number of A-level subjects so that learners develop a deeper knowledge and achieve their qualifications with higher grades.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and managers have a relentless focus on improvement and have acted very effectively on the recommendations from the previous inspection. Consequently, they have further improved teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes for learners. The strong emphasis which leaders place on English and mathematics has successfully raised standards of teaching and learners' achievement in these subjects. The introduction of senior practitioners to coach and support teachers has contributed to the very high standards of teaching and learning across the college.
- Managers, staff and learners work collaboratively to create a highly positive, respectful and supportive college community. Managers' design of the curriculum, policies and support for learners is highly effective. Consequently, learners develop into well-rounded, thoughtful and caring people who are prepared very well for their next steps.
- Senior leaders have a clear and well-planned strategy to continually improve college facilities, the use of resources and learners' experiences. They communicate this very well to staff at all levels. As a result, staff are strongly committed to the college and leaders' vision of supporting learners to achieve excellence.
- Leaders are not afraid to take difficult decisions. For example, they reduced apprenticeship numbers in sporting excellence and agriculture. This was to ensure that the apprenticeship programme remained of high quality while new standards were being developed and implemented nationally. As a result, the number of apprentices at the college is currently low.
- All staff raise learners' ambitions well, including those of disadvantaged learners. Managers provide very effective help to a small number of learners who need financial assistance through well-managed bursaries, grants and other forms of financial support.
- Since the previous inspection, managers have introduced the highly successful 'Hartpury Certificate' for all learners on study programmes. This goes beyond the mandatory study programme requirements and provides learners with additional activities, work experience and opportunities for personal development. Employers who work with the college understand and value its purpose. The certificate makes a strong contribution to learners gaining employment after their courses.
- Managers provide teachers with highly effective continuous professional development which helps them to improve their teaching. Managers have recently implemented a more rigorous system for observing teaching, learning and assessment which contributes effectively to staff appraisals. Managers use appraisals well to have very useful professional discussions with teachers to help improve their teaching. An effective system which involves teachers observing one another enables them to share tips and techniques. Managers and senior practitioners encourage and support teachers to experiment and explore how to improve learning further.
- Managers evaluate the college's effectiveness insightfully through the college's self-assessment report. Leaders and managers involve staff well in judging performance across the college and use the views of learners extensively to plan improvements. Leaders and managers have ready access to accurate data, which they use well to

evaluate the performance of different groups of learners. Consequently, senior leaders and governors have a deep understanding of the strengths and small areas for improvement and are swift to act on any underperformance. Managers produce clear and concise action plans following the self-assessment process. They monitor the implementation and impact of the actions very effectively.

- Managers and staff have excellent links with a wide range of external partners. They use these links to the great benefit of learners. For example, equine learners gain a unique insight into professional equestrian events through work experience at national and international riding competitions held at the college. Agricultural and technology companies provide industry standard equipment for learners and excellent professional development for staff. Animal management staff and learners work closely with local parks and zoos, which also provide expert guest speakers.
- The very strong networks which staff maintain with employers in land-based and sports sectors provide invaluable work placements for all learners. Many learners gain full- or part-time jobs or apprenticeships as a result. Highly effective relationships with professional rugby clubs and elite sporting organisations result in influential coaches and trainers seeing learners displaying their talents in their chosen sport. As a result, many learners go on to compete at a high level.
- Managers work very effectively with two subcontractors, the Rugby Football Union and Gloucester Football Association, to provide short level 1 and 2 sports coaching qualifications to adults across the UK. College staff manage these subcontractors well and support them effectively to continually improve.

The governance of the provider

- Governors are very well informed about all aspects of the college because of the highly detailed reports they obtain from senior leaders and the useful meetings they attend. Governors are diligent in ensuring that they are well informed about the specific areas of the college they are assigned to scrutinise, and they discharge their responsibilities very effectively.
- Governors have a wide range of highly relevant experience and expertise. They use these well to hold senior leaders and managers to account and ensure that leaders make improvements quickly. Governors are highly effective at scrutinising finances, resources, the quality of teaching, and safeguarding.
- As a result of outstanding governance and leadership, learners benefit from resources for sport, agriculture and equine that are of the highest quality.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have implemented a strong culture of safety which keeps learners safe in potentially high-risk activities. Staff and learners know how to report concerns and are confident that these are handled appropriately. Regular training in safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty for staff, including updates on national issues such as domestic violence and female genital mutilation, ensures that staff discharge their safeguarding duties effectively.

- Managers share information well to ensure that learners receive relevant support to help them overcome any concerns or barriers they may have. For example, attention is paid to those learners who are living away from home for the first time. At regular safeguarding meetings, staff consider individual case studies and review thoroughly current safeguarding arrangements. Staff conduct appropriate risk assessments and enforce safety protocols in practical areas very effectively.
- Managers implement effective checks when recruiting new staff and liaise effectively with a range of external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers are highly skilled at reviewing learner performance and advising individuals on the small, very precise aspects that need to improve. This very effective cycle of assessment and teaching activities makes a highly positive contribution to learners' standards of performance.
- Teachers' assessment practice is exemplary. They assess learners' existing skills and knowledge thoroughly, including their personal and social, sporting and equine skills, at the start of their programme. They use this information to plan individual programmes meticulously for each learner. For example, teachers design study programmes to take into account the commitments elite athletes have to training and competitions. This includes ensuring that learners have time to refresh and recover following competitions.
- Teachers are very well qualified. Many have extensive industry and sports backgrounds at a high level. Teachers use their specialist expertise well to ignite and foster their learners' curiosity and enthusiasm. Many are examiners for awarding organisations. They use the insight they gain from this role well when coaching their learners to achieve as well as they can. They stay up to date with their specialist area and have a strong understanding of how to teach very well.
- Teachers challenge learners to do the very best they can, for example by setting work which makes learners think deeply about their learning. Most teachers make excellent use of very current events to make lessons highly relevant to learners' lives. For example, business and economics lessons focused on impending supermarket mergers. The quality of teaching in a small number of A-level subjects does not match the very high standards seen elsewhere in the college. Leaders have effective plans in place to tackle this issue.
- Teachers use group work and research activities skilfully to develop learners' teamwork and independent learning to a high level. For example, learners working in the reptile house develop research skills effectively when recording the impact of low temperatures in North America on the local iguana population. Agriculture learners enhance their knowledge of debating well when analysing the factors which affect milk production and how to increase the calcium content of milk through feed composition.
- Vocational teachers develop learners' mathematics skills very well because they link them effectively to activities and tasks. For example, learners following animal management programmes at level 2 calculate the volume of water in large fish tanks in order to know how much to change without harming the fish. Agricultural learners calculate proportions of chemical sprays needed for specific areas of fields.

- Teachers provide useful guidance on improving learners' written English. Learners take full advantage of this help. They gain confidence in writing assignments, develop a better use of technical and complex language and correctly identify errors in their written work before they submit it. In GCSE English, learners develop good creative writing skills, using metaphors and quotations and structuring paragraphs well.
- Staff have an uncompromising focus on monitoring the progress of each learner through a highly sophisticated and effective tracking system. This brings together all aspects of the learners' experience at college. Staff review each learner's progress regularly against agreed and challenging targets, including for English and mathematics, study skills, additional qualifications, enrichment activities and work experience. Consequently, learners know the progress they have made in great detail, and what they still need to improve. As a result, learners consistently strive to improve the standard of their academic work and vocational skills.
- The standard of learners' work is exceptionally high. Teachers provide excellent feedback which helps learners to improve their performance and gain higher grades in examinations. Teachers successfully encourage learners to take pride in their work. This is exemplified in the very high standards of presentation achieved in an excellent investigative project all study programme learners undertake.
- Learners develop outstanding vocational and practical skills which are frequently well above the standards expected for the level of their courses. Apprentices on sporting excellence apprenticeships develop high-level skills that improve their performance and career potential, including as professional athletes. Adults learn to coach small and larger groups of players very well.
- The college's excellent resources and facilities inspire learners and allow them to attain high standards of expertise. For example, equine learners and apprentices train in competition-standard indoor and outdoor arenas. They use a highly technical rider performance simulator to develop their physiological, technical and tactical riding skills to very high levels.
- Staff use highly effective systems at the start of programmes to assess learners' needs for additional support. As a result, learners with an identified need receive timely and appropriate help. Learning support staff provide effective support to learners, both in and out of classes. The inclusion of skilled learning support staff in all English and mathematics GCSE classes ensures that learners make very good progress in these lessons. The college supports the few learners with high-needs funding or education, health and care plans extremely well. These learners have an assistant assigned to them who provides highly effective support in lessons and in their personal lives.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- Learners rightly take immense pride in their academic, vocational and sporting achievements. They encourage, respect and assist each other to achieve ambitious and aspirational goals. Learners make a huge contribution to the college's strong community culture.
- Learners' attendance and punctuality at lessons and at their work placements is excellent. Their behaviour in college, in community activities and at work placements is exemplary. Learners consistently demonstrate very high standards of behaviour at all times. Neither

learners nor staff tolerate disruptive or disrespectful attitudes. Learners discuss topical issues, such as disability in sport, in a mature way and show high levels of respect for others' ideas and views.

- Learners develop high levels of self-confidence and discipline. They have an astute awareness of their current progress in all aspects of their college life and are very clear about what they wish to achieve.
- All learners undertake well-planned and meaningful external work placements. These are highly appropriate to their career aspirations and include experience in zoos, wildlife parks, on farms and in equine or canine therapy. Their work placements help them to understand the demands of their chosen careers. They enable learners to develop useful additional skills and knowledge to help them achieve their career goals. Employers give learners very useful feedback on their performance in their work placements. Learners produce insightful and mature evaluations on how they can prepare for employment. The Hartpury College certificate reinforces learners' preparation for work and is valued highly by them.
- Learners benefit from extensive additional training courses and other activities to develop their personal, social and vocational skills. These enhance learners' preparation for work extremely well. For example, agriculture learners undertake training in chainsaw maintenance and in the safe use of pesticides. Learners on agricultural engineering programmes complete welding certificates. Equine learners complete British Horse Society certificates in subjects such as riding and road safety.
- Learners enjoy an impressive range of activities to explore life in modern society, both in the UK and abroad. These raise their awareness of cultural diversity and equality very effectively. For example, every year, animal management learners visit Borneo to study orangutans and turtle preservation. Equine learners work with riders with disabilities on a regular basis at the equine therapy centre.
- Learners, including those with education, health and care plans, benefit from comprehensive, well-planned and highly effective impartial careers advice and guidance. This starts before their arrival at college and continues throughout their courses. Careers guidance staff are qualified to a high level. Together with external advisers and industry experts, they provide excellent specialist information, advice and guidance to all learners. Learners' career aspirations are ambitious but realistic because staff manage their expectations skilfully.
- Learners' health and well-being are at the heart of the Hartpury College ethos and culture. College welfare services are comprehensive, well managed and highly effective. Specialist staff, including a chaplain, two nurses and counsellors, provide excellent support for learners' mental, emotional and physical health. The recent appointment of a mental health nurse has significantly increased the capacity for welfare support within the team. This has had a demonstrably positive impact on reducing the number of learners with mental health problems who leave their courses early.
- The college's tutorial programme is highly effective in its coverage of the wide range of learners' academic, vocational and welfare needs. Learners value highly the support and guidance they receive from this programme. Learners spoke very positively of 'Wellfest', an event organised in conjunction with local agencies in Gloucestershire to showcase practices to promote healthy minds and bodies.

- As a result of the college's 'Fit for Life' initiative, learners improve their physical well-being through activities such as yoga, Pilates and glow-in-the-dark badminton. This has a very positive impact, particularly for those learners who are not regular participants in fitness or sporting activity.
- Learners feel safe in college and on external visits and work placements. They understand where to seek help or advice. They have the confidence to report concerns about their own or others' safety, and trust staff to take immediate and appropriate action where necessary. The strongly positive and nurturing ethos on campus reported by learners helps them to feel very secure and become more independent. It prepares them very well for the next stage of their academic or vocational careers. This community ethos extends beyond the end of the course, for example to alumni groups.
- Learners have a good understanding of the potential threats of radicalisation and extremism. Learners clearly articulate issues that are relevant to their own industries. For example, animal management learners and agriculture learners discuss the legalities and ethics of foxhunting and badger culling.

Outcomes for learners

Outstanding

- The vast majority of current learners make exceptional progress in developing their skills and knowledge on sporting, animal management, equine and agriculture programmes. Most learners studying at A level make very good progress in developing new knowledge. A very large proportion of learners complete their courses. This proportion has increased over the last two years.
- In 2016/17, a very high proportion of learners, including adults and apprentices, achieved their qualifications. Managers successfully reduced gaps in achievement between groups of learners, for example between male and female learners.
- A very large proportion of learners following vocational and technical courses in 2016/17 gained or exceeded the grades they were expected to achieve based on their starting points. Learners working for diplomas in animal management, agriculture, horse management, countryside management and sport did particularly well. Learners studying at A level in biology, geography, English literature and language, physical education and environmental science also achieved or exceeded their expected grades. However, learners studying A-level psychology, business studies and mathematics did not achieve the grades of which they were capable.
- The number of learners achieving grades A* to C, or grades 4 to 9, in English and mathematics GCSEs increased in 2016/17 and was high, especially for English. A high proportion of those who have taken their GCSE in English and mathematics in the current year achieved at grades 4 to -9. Not enough learners who took functional skills in English and mathematics in 2016/17 achieved their qualifications.
- A very high proportion of learners studying at level 3 progress to university, further study or into work related to the subject they studied. For example, equine learners find work as grooms in competition yards and for international polo teams. Outdoor adventure learners work in summer outdoor education camps overseas, followed by winter sports activities in the French Alps. A large proportion of level 2 learners, especially learners on agriculture courses, go on to study at level 3, or move directly into work.

- A very large proportion of learners who complete advanced apprenticeships in sporting excellence continue to play their sport at international, club or university level. For example, learners gain rowing scholarships at American and British universities. Some represent their country in the pentathlon and women's rugby, including at the most recent Olympic Games.
- Almost all agriculture apprentices who completed their apprenticeships over the last few years moved into full-time employment in agricultural industries. A high number of learners on equine advanced apprenticeships in sporting excellence go on to work in the equine industry.
- Adult learners who complete their sports coaching awards contribute positively to community and school sports teams. Almost all adults following access to HE courses go on to study related subjects, such as animal behaviour or sports science, at university.

Types of provision

Study programmes

Outstanding

- A very large majority of the college's 1,633 study programme learners on level 3 programmes and the small number studying at level 2 are making rapid progress. The largest number are on programmes in sport. The other large subject areas are equine, agriculture, animal management and veterinary science. A small proportion of learners study A levels. Over half of these also complete specialist training in sport, such as the advanced apprenticeship in sporting excellence. Taken in the round, learners' achievement is outstanding.
- Leaders provide excellent study programmes. They manage study programmes very well to ensure that the education and experiences they offer are those of most value to learners. The carefully designed curriculum includes qualifications and activities which supplement learners' core qualification very well. For agriculture learners, these include training in driving in rough-terrain vehicles and the use of telescopic lift trucks. Around half of equine learners gain additional British Horse Society qualifications. The sporting activities that sports learners take part in are exceptional, including frequent activities outside the college with local children and communities.
- The A-level study programme provides a very valuable route for high-performing athletes to attain academic qualifications alongside developing their sporting expertise. This ensures that they have options to progress to higher education or a career in sport. Their improvement as athletes is exceptional. However, a small proportion of A-level learners do not achieve the grades of which they are capable.
- Teachers have very close links with relevant industries. Consequently, learners gain a very good insight into the latest innovations. Extremely high-quality work placements are combined exceptionally well with careers advice and guidance to help learners understand their subjects better and provide insight relevant to their studies and future careers. Agriculture learners broaden their perspective and understanding of the agricultural sector through well-managed and highly effective 12-month work placements in the second year of their three-year course. Learners in all sectors often gain full- or part-time employment as a result of their work placements.

- All learners who have yet to achieve a high grade in English and mathematics at GCSE are enrolled on an appropriate qualification. Teachers in all subjects ensure that learners acquire mathematical knowledge relevant to the subject. For example, level 3 agriculture learners apply complex mathematical formulae to estimate the flotation volume required for a duck house and the costs saved using recycled materials. Learners improve their study, research and verbal communication skills extremely well.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130687
Type of provider	Specialist further education college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	3,658
Principal/CEO	Mr Russell Marchant
Telephone number	01452 702132
Website	www.hartpury.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)		1	99	30	1,534	38	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	1	0	59	1	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	8							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Rugby Football Union Gloucester Football Association							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice 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. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls, online surveys and webinars to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions and assessments. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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