

Hadlow College

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 130733

Name of lead inspector: David Martin HMI

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Type of provider: Specialist College

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Information about the provider

1. Hadlow College is the only specialist land-based college in Kent and Medway. Its main campus is some four miles from Tonbridge, in West Kent. Four smaller centres are in other parts of Kent and South London. The college's estate has grown significantly since the previous inspection. The main campus is on a 1,000-acre estate. The recent purchase of a nearby farm added 60 acres and more residential accommodation. Princess Christian Farm, a centre for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, was acquired through a partnership with Kent County Council. The college has residential accommodation for 230 learners. Its mission is 'to be an outstanding land-based college'.
2. The college attracts learners from a wide geographical area, including Kent, Medway, outer London and further afield. Forty-five per cent of its income is generated by further education provision, funded by the successor bodies to the Learning and Skills Council. Higher education, with 626 learners, and commercial operations generate 24% and 31% of income respectively. A wide range of vocational further education courses are offered, mostly learner responsive, focusing on land-based and related sectors. Currently there are 915 full-time and 687 part-time further education learners, 67 apprentices and 129 Train to Gain learners. Attending college-based link courses are 200 school pupils, aged from 14 to 16. The proportions of learners aged from 16 to 18 and 19 and over are roughly equal. Around 60% of learners are female and 93% are of White British heritage.
3. Kent and Medway include some relatively affluent communities, including West Kent, but there are areas of deprivation. The college also recruits from South East London boroughs with some of the highest indices of deprivation in the United Kingdom. The number of young people not in employment, education or training is consistently lower in Kent and Medway than in the United Kingdom as a whole.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	230 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	624 full-time learners 31 part-time learners
Foundation learning	67 full-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	123 full-time learners 654 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	129 learners 67 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Grade 1
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	1
Quality of provision	1
Leadership and management	1
Safeguarding	1
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	
Animal care and agriculture	2
Equine studies	1
Horticulture and floristry	1

Overall effectiveness

4. Hadlow is an outstanding college, which has made much progress since the previous inspection. It has successfully tackled the key areas for improvement that inspection identified. Two of the three subject areas inspected have improved their inspection grades, one by two grades. The college's capacity to improve further is outstanding. Quality improvement arrangements, including the college's self-assessment of its own strengths and weaknesses, are now very strong. The views of college users strongly influence the college's decision making and quality improvement.
5. Learners achieve outstanding outcomes and very much enjoy their learning. Pass and completion rates on further education courses are high and continue to improve. Outcomes for apprenticeship and Train to Gain courses are good, but the number of learners completing their courses within agreed timescales is still too low. Learners' standards of behaviour are high. Their skills and standards of work are good and often outstanding, especially in practical work. They make good progress on their courses. Many continue studies to higher

levels, often at the college. Learners feel very safe in the college. Safeguarding of learners is outstanding.

6. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their practical knowledge and experience well to motivate and inspire learners. They plan lessons well and make very good use of the college's extensive site, with high quality resources, to enliven their teaching. In a minority of lessons, classrooms are not of good quality and teachers make insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT).
7. A broad and expanding range of courses excellently meets a wide range of learners' needs and that of the local and wider communities. Extensive and highly effective partnerships with other organisations help to improve the quality of learners' courses. The care, guidance and support of learners are of the highest quality, including that for residential learners.
8. Senior managers and governors successfully direct all their efforts at improving the quality of the college's work for learners. Finances and resources are managed highly efficiently and shrewdly to benefit learners. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good, but insufficiently explored in lessons.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Learners' attainment of learner-responsive qualifications is high. The college's overall success rate has improved significantly since the previous inspection, when outcomes for learners were judged to be good. Success rates are particularly high for learners aged from 16 to 18 on long courses. Short course success rates are very high.
- Employer-responsive, Train to Gain and apprenticeship outcomes are good overall and improved on earlier years. They are better for Train to Gain than for apprenticeships, where they are still below national averages. Completion within expected timescales is satisfactory for Train to Gain, but still low for too many apprenticeship programmes.
- Learners' standards of work, and the skills learners develop, are good and often outstanding, especially in practical tasks. They make good progress and attain their learning goals. Progression to further studies is good. Learners enjoy their work and are proud of their achievements. They are strongly motivated by their studies and develop the confidence and enthusiasm to engage in further learning.
- Arrangements for safeguarding learners are outstanding. Learners feel very safe in the college and demonstrate very safe working practices.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and technical instructors use the currency of their excellent vocational knowledge and expertise very well to motivate and inspire learners to achieve. Well-planned teaching uses the extensive and excellent resources very well, although a small number of

classrooms require updating and the effective use of ILT in teaching is too variable.

- The initial and ongoing assessment of learners is good. Initial assessment thoroughly and clearly identifies the support needs of learners, which are then well planned into teaching activities. Assessment of learners' work and progress is good. Work-based learning employers, though, are insufficiently involved in reviews of their learners' progress.
- The needs and interests of users are exceptionally well met. Learners have excellent opportunities for progression. The college uses employers' views well and responds very well to their suggestions. Learners make good use of the particularly wide range of enrichment activities.
- The college has outstanding links with a very wide range of partners. Employers and charitable organisations provide learners with opportunities to practise their vocational skills and extend them further. The college's social inclusion agenda is at the core of activities to extend its provision to groups of learners who otherwise may miss opportunities to experience its offer.
- Support and guidance for learners are outstanding. The college's seamless support service helps to identify and work with learners to overcome barriers to learning. Information, advice and guidance are expertly given. Specialist external organisations complement this work. The significant number of residential learners is very well supported by the expert residential staff.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior managers and governors successfully promote a culture of high aspiration and service to learners. College targets are challenging and monitoring of progress by managers and governors is thorough and robust, supported by totally reliable data. The college's extensive and successful commercial activities are designed to benefit learners.
- Arrangements for learners and other stakeholders to inform decision making and promote high quality are outstanding. Learners influence many aspects of course management. Employers and communities are systematically consulted and influence the quality and range of provision.
- Quality assurance is outstanding, leading to sustained improvements in recent years, for example, in outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching and learning. Learners contribute through course reviews, surveys and focus groups. Governors and employers are fully involved.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and well established in college strategies and plans, at all levels. The college monitors achievement, complaints and implementation of policies thoroughly. It identifies any differences in performance between groups. Opportunities to promote equality and diversity are at times missed in lessons and not always sufficiently reviewed in work-based learning.
- Value for money is outstanding. The college has improved outcomes, while increasing enrolments, often of less traditional learners, and while extending its estates. Resources are managed efficiently and effectively to benefit learners.

The college has self-funded major initiatives. Sustainable management of resources and efficiency are monitored carefully.

What does Hadlow College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of ILT in lessons to drive up teaching standards and increase the amount of outstanding teaching.
- Improve the engagement of employers in work-based learning programmes in order to improve the quality of training and outcomes for learners.
- Improve the promotion of equality and diversity in lessons to ensure that learners develop a better understanding of the diverse world in which they live.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the strong ethos of respect and equality in the college
- feeling safe and the friendly atmosphere in the college
- the well-qualified and experienced staff who are very supportive and help learners enjoy college
- their practical work
- the good quality resources
- the range of additional activities to help them enjoy their time at college
- the excellent advice learners receive about progression routes within, and outside, the college
- the way the college listens to learners and resolves any issues they identify
- the college's excellent reputation amongst employers.

What learners would like to see improved:

- communicating timetable changes better
- the number and availability of computers in the college's library
- catering facilities at the animal care unit.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the college's passion to work closely and productively with them
- the high quality of college management
- the significant contribution which the college makes to local, regional and national partnerships
- the positive way in which the college works together with local employers
- the good level of practical skills which the college teaches learners

- learners' good understanding of the world of work
- the college's high quality resources that enable learners to work with industry standard equipment.

What employers would like to see improved:

No areas for improvement were identified.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement Grade 1

9. The strong focus on excellence established by senior managers and governors has led to significant improvements across all aspects of the college's provision. Success rates have risen markedly at a time of major growth in learner numbers, key capital project management and the extension of the college's estate. Teaching and learning are much improved since the previous inspection. The areas for improvement from that inspection have all been successfully remedied, with much improved inspection grades for subject areas.
10. Outstanding quality assurance helps bring about improvement. Internal and external validation and moderation ensure secure, evidence-based judgements. Self-assessment is rigorous and accurate. Learners, employers and other stakeholders contribute to decision making and quality improvement. Governors know the college well and provide robust challenge and scrutiny. Staff and governors carry out their work with the quality of the experience for learners at the forefront of their thinking.

Outcomes for learners Grade 1

11. Learners' attainment of their qualifications in learner-responsive provision is outstanding. The college's overall success rate has improved significantly since the previous inspection, when achievements and standards were judged to be good. The college's indicative overall success rate data for 2009/10, with clear improvements in retention, show continuing improvement. Overall success rates were high, at 85%, in 2008/09. For long courses, constituting most provision, they are also high, and particularly so for learners aged from 16 to 18. They are lower for learners aged 19 and over, but are still just above the national average for specialist colleges. Success rates for short courses are very high, at 97% overall. Overall pass rates are very high and retention rates high, at 97% and 87% respectively for long courses in 2008/09.
12. High, and improving, overall success rates are a characteristic of all subject areas. Long course success rates, for learners aged from 16 to 18, are improved for all levels of course. This is most marked at advanced level, with an improvement of eight percentage points over the last three years, to 86% overall in 2008/09. Literacy, numeracy and language achievement have improved in recent years, to 52% in 2008/09, but this is still relatively low.
13. Outcomes for employer-responsive provision are good. Overall completion rates for Train to Gain and apprenticeships are now good overall, but better for Train to Gain. They are still below national averages for the smaller number of apprentices. Completion within the agreed timescale is satisfactory for Train to Gain learners, but still too low for many apprenticeship programmes.

14. The college analyses data well to identify any differences in the performance of learners. It is closing any key achievement gaps. The college has noted few differences in pass rates by gender, but the overall retention of males is significantly lower than for females. Success rates for the various minority ethnic groups show no significant areas of underachievement. Residential learners achieve as well as learners overall.
15. Learners' improvement of their economic and social well-being is outstanding. Their standards of work, and the skills they develop, are good and often outstanding, especially in practical tasks. Work-based learners achieve good standards of work, both in their portfolios and in lessons and practical tasks. Learners very much enjoy their studies and are rightly proud of their achievements. Their attendance, which continues to improve, is good, at 88% in 2008/09.
16. Learners are well-motivated and develop the confidence and enthusiasm to study further. Their progression between levels of study is good, with often around 50% or more moving from one level to another. Progression from national diploma courses to higher education is good and has improved significantly in recent years. On three national diploma courses it was 50% or over.
17. Learners are safe, and feel very safe, within the college. As confirmed by the Ofsted Care Standards inspection in March 2009, they have outstanding opportunities to help them make informed decisions about their health and well-being. These include: excellent use of the tutorial programme to promote health; the proactive role of the college welfare service; and, the college's participation in the 'Healthy College' initiative. Learners make an outstanding contribution to both the college and local communities. Their wide range of highly effective involvement is often integrated with the work of their subject areas, where extensive engagement outside the college is the norm. Within the college, the 'learner voice' is a powerful contributor to shaping the work and development of the college.

The quality of provision

Grade 1

18. Teaching and learning are good and are much improved since the previous inspection. Learners are highly motivated and inspired to learn from their teachers and technical instructors, who have noticeable enthusiasm and passion for their subjects. Many run their own businesses and have current industry knowledge and skills that benefit learners enormously.
19. Teaching is well planned. Practical teaching is strong and the college makes the best use of its extensive site to provide excellent resources for subject areas. A small number of teaching rooms are in need of refurbishment. Teachers use a good variety of activities that hold learners' interest and challenge them to aspire. They demonstrate very good classroom management and learners exhibit excellent behaviour. The availability of ILT has improved in recent years. However, it is not consistently well used in lessons. In weaker lessons, the slow

pace results in loss of attention by some learners. Teachers sometimes demonstrate limited planning and attention to meeting the various needs of individual learners within lessons.

20. Learners are particularly well supported in lessons and in one-to-one tutorials. Initial assessments are thorough and learners are directed to appropriate diagnostic assessment and scheduled support, where needed. The college has improved well its integration of language, literacy and numeracy skills within vocational area teaching. Assessment briefs are clear and feedback to learners is comprehensive, clearly indicating what learners need to do to improve.
21. Teachers and technical instructors are all appropriately qualified. Teachers have, or are working towards, an appropriate teaching qualification. Assessors are encouraged to work towards teaching qualifications. The advanced practitioner and subject learning coaches are instrumental in ensuring that teachers have opportunities to develop teaching skills and share good practice. An excellent range of workshops and professional development facilitates this. The 'stepping up' programme successfully improves teaching, where lessons have been observed to be satisfactory or inadequate. The majority of teachers improve their grades and some by more than one grade.
22. The college meets the needs and interests of users outstandingly well. The range of courses is exceptionally good. The college plans very well and provides excellent opportunities for progression to higher-level courses. Courses have clear progression routes and provision is available from entry level to degree level. The college pays particularly good attention to the needs expressed by employers. It responds very positively, ensuring learners have opportunities to gain additional qualifications in those skills advocated by employers. Excellent use is made of local employers and charitable organisations to provide work experience. Employers of work-based learners though are insufficiently involved in learners' reviews of progress.
23. Enrichment activities are excellent and well attended. A loyalty card system incentivises learners to attend. Residential learners value and enjoy the evening activities arranged by the college or themselves. Learner common rooms are of good quality and are well used. Subject areas organise a very good range of additional activities to complement core programmes. Teachers use their industry links very well to invite speakers and arrange visits to employers and organisations. Learners go on study tours, and attend exhibitions and specialist events, such as the Chelsea Flower Show and Hampton Court Show.
24. Partnership working is outstanding. The college has developed a wide range of partnerships with schools, employers, community organisations and public sector bodies that benefit learners in a variety of ways. Learners have particularly good opportunities to gain vocationally relevant experience working in partners' organisations as well as providing services for them. The college's provision is very well planned and helps to promote social inclusion very effectively; for example, through provision for young people who are not in

education, employment or training, a new provision to cater for adults with specific learning difficulties, and the Fresh Start up-skilling initiative.

25. Personal support for learners is outstanding. The restructured Skills for Life team offers a seamless support service for learners, providing for their functional skills, information, advice and guidance and welfare concerns. They successfully identify, and work towards, breaking down barriers to learning, which may put learners at risk from underachieving. The team has developed links with a range of credible external organisations offering specialist advice and support. Confidential counselling services are well used. Residential learners benefit enormously from the coordinated support between residential staff and daytime curriculum teams.
26. Highly successful information, advice and guidance are at the core of pre-entry activities for learners. The college offers an extensive range of events to help learners choose the most suitable course. Planning learners' progression into higher education or employment and using the established links with the local Connexions service enhances this support. Regular group tutorials include a good range of issues relating to the health and well-being of learners. Learners are helped to recognise their progress and plan future goals effectively during individual tutorials.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

27. The principal, senior managers and governors provide outstanding leadership and management. They have successfully established a culture of high aspiration throughout the college. Staff at all levels are clear about the mission and are committed to achieving excellence. Strategic planning is well informed by global, national and local factors, and by consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The extensive, successful commercial activities are developed in line with the strategy and must always demonstrate benefit for learners. Planning at all levels is coherent. Targets are challenging and monitoring of progress is thorough and robust, supported by accurate, well-presented data.
28. Governance is outstanding. Governors have a good range of skills and expertise that they use effectively. They are closely involved in reviewing and updating the mission and strategy and make a significant contribution. They know the college well. Analytical reports from managers and well-structured faculty links keep them well informed of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. They provide robust scrutiny and challenge.
29. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding; the college fulfils all its statutory requirements. A suitable range of well-prepared policies and procedures ensure the safety and well-being of learners. Risk management is comprehensive and includes the safety and welfare of learners and staff. The college has successfully created a safe environment for learners in the challenging circumstances of an open campus. College buildings are secure; areas not open to the public are clearly designated; learners and staff are aware of the need to be alert in locations where members of the public have access. The Ofsted Care

Standards inspection report in March 2009 judged that the college offers an excellent service to its residential learners and keeps them safe.

30. The promotion of equality and diversity is good and well established in the college's strategies and plans at all levels. The college monitors achievement by different groups and takes action to 'close the gap', for example, in success rates between male and female learners. In 2008/09 success rates for the 29% of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were in line with the overall success rates. Complaints, incidents and accidents are analysed by gender, ethnicity and disability to determine whether there are any important differences. Carefully chosen role models challenge stereotypes in curriculum and marketing materials. The college is successful in recruiting men to equine courses and women to land-based provision. Helpful training, briefings and exemplar materials support staff to use suitable approaches in their work, although opportunities to promote equality and diversity are at times missed in lessons. Employers of work-based learning trainees have useful guidance on equality and diversity, but the impact of their work with learners is insufficiently monitored. Issues relating to bullying and racism are addressed in tutorial sessions to help extend understanding and promote tolerance.
31. Outstanding arrangements are in place for learners and other stakeholders to inform decision making and promote high quality. Learners have extensive opportunities to be heard, including termly meetings with senior managers, focus groups, 'you said, we did' input, the student association and membership of college committees and the governing body. This year's student conference gave learners the opportunity to make an input into important areas, such as equality and diversity and safeguarding as well as matters relating to their courses. The student council is made up of elected course representatives who also attend course team meetings and contribute to reviews. Learners have influenced aspects of course management such as the length of lessons. Employers and communities are formally and informally consulted and involved through the college's successful network of contacts and through diverse forums and committees.
32. Quality assurance and self-assessment are outstanding and lead to improvement. They are thorough, comprehensive and cover all aspects of the college's work. External and internal validation and moderation are strong. Governors and employers are involved in this process. Learners contribute through course reviews, surveys and focus groups. There are sustained improvements in recent years, for example in outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching and learning. Action plans are rigorously monitored to assess progress and improvement. Policies and procedures for the observation of teaching and learning, with excellent guidance, are up-to-date and clear. Staff are very well supported to improve their teaching. Judgements about the quality of teaching and learning are externally moderated. Nevertheless, grades awarded are at times over-generous.
33. Value for money is outstanding. Resources are managed highly efficiently and shrewdly to benefit learners. Enrolments have increased significantly from 330

full-time learners in 2005/06 to 930 in 2009/10, and the college has extended its estates while improving outcomes for learners. Financial management is outstanding. The college has generated the majority of funding for major initiatives, such as the animal management unit, through its commercial activities. It has low dependency on public funding, having invested around £16m from internal funds over the past seven years. Sustainable management of resources is a priority for the college, alongside efficiency, and both are monitored carefully. Most resources to support learning are outstanding, although learners report that there is insufficient access to computers at times.

Subject areas

Animal care and agriculture

Grade 2

Context

34. In animal care, 449 learners follow full-time BTEC first and national diplomas, a national award and a certificate in land-based studies. In agriculture, 49 learners follow full-time BTEC first and national diploma courses and 10 follow a foundation certificate in land-based studies. Most learners are female and aged from 16 to 18. Fourteen learners are on apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes. Forty-three local school pupils, aged 14 to 16, are on either an entry level or foundation level course for one day a week

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high on the national diploma in animal management and certificate in land-based studies courses, but low on the first and national diplomas in agriculture. Success rates for apprentices and Train to Gain learners in agriculture and animal care are good.
- Pass rates are high on most courses. They are very high on the national diploma in animal management, first and national diplomas in agriculture, and for the certificates in land-based studies.
- Retention of learners is often good. It varies across the college campuses. At Hadlow and Mottingham, on the national diploma in animal management, it is high, but only satisfactory at Canterbury. For the Hadlow-based first diploma in animal management it is high, while satisfactory for Mottingham and Canterbury. In agriculture, retention on the national diploma is low and satisfactory for first diploma.
- Standards of learners' work are good. Most learners in practical lessons demonstrate good practical skills. Most written work is of a good standard. Standards of work on apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes are good. Attendance is satisfactory.
- Learners feel very safe and enjoy their lessons and courses. They confirm inspectors' views that they are well safeguarded and receive high levels of support from their teachers. Teachers are very accessible outside of lessons for learners seeking either pastoral or academic support. Learners are clear on the college's policies on anti-bullying and equality and diversity.
- Teaching and learning are good. Good use of group work and nominated learner questioning develops discussion and helps learners learn from each other. The strong vocational knowledge and experience of teachers add breadth and depth to teaching. A wide range of external speakers and visits effectively broadens learners' experience and knowledge. Learners work safely in lessons, including in practical activities.
- A minority of teaching is less successful. In such teaching, there are insufficient planned activities to challenge more able learners and support the weaker ones. The progress of the lessons is often slow and learners lose interest. While a

small number of teachers use ILT imaginatively, its overall use is insufficiently well developed.

- Specialist resources are excellent and are well used to support teaching and learning. The outstanding animal care unit and the college farm are used very well for routine duties, such as feeding and cleaning. The farm estate and associated equipment are used extensively. Links with employers and local industry are good. Many provide work placements, talks, practical resources and advice.
- Teachers are well qualified and experienced. They all hold, or are working towards, a teaching qualification. Staff development is good. The programme includes safeguarding and equality and diversity training, academic and technical content.
- The assessment of learners' work is sound, with an appropriate range of assessments. Assessment briefs are clear. Feedback to learners is clear and often tells learners how to improve. Internal verification is thorough in animal care, but there is some assessment inconsistency in agriculture.
- The range of full-time provision, from foundation to advanced levels, meets the needs and interest of learners well. It facilitates learners' internal progression, which is good. A high proportion of learners in animal care progress to higher education courses at the college. Apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes complement learner-responsive provision.
- The support, care and guidance of learners are good and very much valued by them. In-class learning support is good. One-to-one tutorials are good and the dialogue between tutors and learners is productive. However, while progression targets are set, some are vague and lack milestones to measure progress. The reflective logs kept by some learners also lack detail. Group tutorials are satisfactory.
- Leadership and management are good. Subject area communication is good. Team meetings are effective. Learners' interests and needs are clearly at the heart of what the team does. Recruitment is monitored well and used effectively for planning. Self-assessment is inclusive and evaluative and action plans are thorough. Inspectors largely agreed with its judgements. Staff use the course target-setting process well.

What does Hadlow College need to do to improve further?

- Analyse the reasons for low success rates on the first and national diplomas in agriculture and develop strategies for improvement by sharing good practice with other successful areas in the college.
- Develop teaching strategies which meet the complete range of learners' needs in lessons to help learners achieve their individual potential.
- Ensure that the targets set in learners' action plans and reflective logs are sufficiently specific and measurable to facilitate learners' progress at an optimum rate.

Equine studies

Grade 1

Context

35. Currently, 145 learners are on courses in equine studies, offered at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Around two thirds are aged from 16 to 18. Learners attend full time and part time and are based at the college's equine yard. Approximately 90% are female and a very small number are from a minority ethnic heritage. Additionally, the college offers qualifications to 14 pupils from local schools. It also offers higher education courses for approximately 100 learners, in partnership with the University of Greenwich.

Key findings

- Success rates have greatly improved since the previous inspection and are very high. Pass and retention rates are at almost 100%. Language, literacy and numeracy success rates are improving and are now good.
- Learners achieve a good range of additional qualifications to enhance their employability. British Horse Society qualifications are integrated into full-time courses. Pass rates at stages 1 and 2 have been very high for the last three years. A small number of learners take stage 3 and achieve equally high success rates.
- Learners are well prepared for employment in the equine industry. They develop very good practical skills and competence. Learners are involved in realistic yard duties, on a rotation basis, building fitness and self-discipline. More experienced learners develop supervisory skills as team leaders. Learners are attentive, work diligently and attend very well.
- Learners enjoy their studies and are very well safeguarded and protected. Health and safety are rigorously managed. Learners feel safe and demonstrate a good awareness of safe working practices. There is very close attention to safeguarding, with any concerns dealt with swiftly by staff. This is greatly valued by learners.
- Learners have good knowledge and understanding about their health and well-being, allowing them to make informed choices about their lifestyles. However, the college insufficiently evaluates the impact of its awareness programme on learners' personal lifestyles.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers use their considerable knowledge and experience to motivate and enthuse learners. They inspire learners and lesson activities are sharply focused to meeting individual learners' needs. Assessors provide evaluative feedback on both written and practical work with clear advice on improvement.
- Learners benefit from a very stimulating programme of additional study enrichment opportunities. The college has very good relationships with employers and professional riders. These provide excellent opportunities for work experience and industry visits. Learners compete at local and inter-college competitions, hosted at the college and across the region.

- Course provision meets the needs of users very well. School pupils aged 14 to 16 complete intermediate qualifications before attending the college. Advanced learners increasingly progress to higher education, through the college's foundation degree. Part-time learners undertake national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in their workplace or complete the British Horse Society qualifications. Progression rates to higher education and employment are very high.
- The care, guidance and support of learners are outstanding. They receive highly effective individual support and guidance from teachers. Initial advice and guidance are robust with few learners transferring onto alternative courses. A coherent programme of group and individual tutorials supports learners. Tutors use individual tutorials very effectively to help learners improve their performance.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. A clear strategy to improve the provision since the previous inspection has been successful. Managers have been ambitious, yet realistic, in their drive to secure improvement. Data are used well to monitor performance and review targets.
- Equality and diversity are very well promoted with learners protected from harassment. Well-focused marketing has increased the numbers of male learners within the subject area. Learners often achieve their full potential.
- Quality improvement arrangements are outstanding. Areas for improvement are clearly identified and acted upon. Success rates and the quality of teaching and learning have improved significantly and are now outstanding.
- The area provides outstanding value for money. Learners attain their learning goals and develop good employment skills. The resources and accommodation are excellently used and managed, with the horses well looked after and presented. A few classrooms are drab and uninspiring and too many lack sufficient ILT resources.

What does Hadlow College need to do to improve further?

- Better evaluate the impact of the programme to increase learners' awareness of health and well-being, thus informing the future content and range of these extended activities.
- Further improve the quality of classrooms and the availability of ILT by continuing with redevelopment plans for the classroom and staff accommodation block.

Horticulture and floristry

Grade 1

Context

36. Currently, 811 learners are on full-time and part-time courses at the main campus and six satellite centres. Nine per cent are aged from 16 to 18. Provision is available from entry 3 to advanced level, with further progression opportunities to higher education courses within the college. Nearly 90% of learners follow horticulture courses, of whom 14% study full time. Of the 111 learners on floristry courses, 37% study full time. A further 114 learners are horticultural apprentices and Train to Gain learners, studying mainly in their workplaces.

Key Findings

- Learners' success on most courses is outstanding. However, success for the small numbers of learners on the national diploma in horticulture is satisfactory and poor for a small group of apprentices aged from 16 to 18.
- Learners enjoy, and particularly value, their learning. They feel safe and are well safeguarded. They achieve excellent standards of written and practical work, developing high-quality, commercially-relevant skills, preparing them for employment and higher education. Extensive additional activities, linked to many horticultural organisations, support the development of good personal and social skills.
- Teaching and learning are good, promoting high levels of learner attainment. High standards of learners' behaviour are evident. Teachers motivate learners to achieve and to take responsibility for their learning. A clear commercial focus in lessons helps prepare learners for employment and higher education. In a minority of lessons, the use of questioning to check learners' understanding and develop their progress is underdeveloped.
- Excellent resources are very effectively utilised to help deliver high quality courses. Learners benefit from very good access to extensive and well managed mature gardens, nurseries and commercial retail facilities. Significant investment has provided interactive technologies and audio-visual equipment within classrooms, but it is not yet fully utilised by teachers.
- Teaching staff are highly qualified and have excellent industrial knowledge that enriches the quality of teaching and learning. Curriculum knowledge is enhanced by regular contact with the industry, membership of professional organisations and attendance at regular staff development activities.
- Learners benefit from an excellent range of wider learning opportunities. Their studies introduce them to the commercial nature of the industry, in particular through the college's own facilities for plant production, preparation and retailing. The extensive use of visits to local gardens, commercial organisations and national exhibitions enriches learning at all levels.
- Curriculum design and planning are highly effective, providing clearly defined progression pathways that prepare both full- and part-time learners for entry to

further study or employment. Learners' progression rates are very good and are facilitated by this.

- Outstanding partnerships ensure a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of both learners and other users. It is strengthened through a comprehensive programme of visits and practical activities. Excellent collaborative arrangements with employers enable learners on work-based programmes to benefit from a good range of additional learning opportunities.
- Learners receive excellent individual support, enabling them to fulfil their learning goals. Very good promotion of career and employment opportunities prepares learners well for leaving the college. A value-added system tracks learner progress, but is not effectively embedded into tutorial activities in discussions about learners' progress. Support is insufficiently thorough for the small number of apprentices aged 16 to 18.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. They have successfully promoted improvement since the previous inspection, when provision was judged to be only satisfactory. Quality assurance and self-assessment are rigorous. Managers set ambitious, but realistic, targets for improvement which are then monitored carefully using accurate data. The curriculum provides outstanding value for money.

What does Hadlow College need to do to improve further?

- Provide better advice, guidance and support for learners aged from 16 to 18 on work-based learning programmes, to help improve their success rates.
- Further develop the use of ILT in teaching to help increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.

Information about the inspection

37. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's vice principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from funding agencies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
38. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Hadlow College

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	915		780	135	
Part-time learners	883	200	67	420	196
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1	1	2
Capacity to improve	1				
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1	1	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	1				
How well do learners progress?	1				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1				
How safe do learners feel?	1				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	1				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	1				
Quality of provision	1	1	1	1	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	1				
Leadership and management	1	1	1	1	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	1				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	1				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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