

Inspection of Kingston Maurward College

Inspection dates: 24 to 27 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education courses for young people	Good
Adult learning courses	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Kingston Maurward College (KMC) is a specialist land-based college set in 750 acres of farmland, parkland, gardens, and a conservation area. KMC is located two miles from Dorchester in Dorset. KMC provides courses at entry level through to higher education that mainly train learners for jobs in the land-based sector. At the time of inspection, 738 16- to 18-year-old learners were enrolled on full-time courses. These learners study a wide range of courses including animal management, equine studies, and construction.

The college has 130 learners who have high needs. Just over half of these study foundation courses for learners with few prior qualifications. The rest are studying a range of vocational courses. At the time of inspection, 58 adults were studying the part-time Royal Horticultural Society horticulture level 2 course. A further 16 adult learners were enrolled on a range of full-time courses.

KMC offers six apprenticeship standards, mostly at level 2. These standards include arborist, countryside worker and horticulture/landscape operative. At the time of inspection there were 63 apprentices.

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

Learners and apprentices at KMC are respectful, courteous and pleased to be studying and part of the college. They enjoy their time learning and developing skills. In no small part, this is because they have access to excellent, industry-standard resources. These include indoor and outdoor equine arenas, and a fully working farm. In the well-stocked animal care centre, learners are taught effectively to care for, and handle, a wide variety of mammals, reptiles and amphibians. As a result, they are well prepared for a range of jobs or progression to further education.

Learners put into practice the skills they learn on their course through a wide range of valuable work placements, industry-based activities, and national and international projects. For example, over thirty learners and apprentices from five courses created the garden that won a silver gilt medal at a prestigious flower festival in May 2022.

Learners take part in a wide range of enrichment learning activities that are closely linked to the specialist subjects they study. Many learners take advantage of these practical opportunities to develop and extend the new skills and knowledge they have learned. For example, blacksmith, fabrication, and welding students designed and built cartwheels for use in the local area and produced forged flowers for a funeral. Agriculture students apply the dry-stone walling techniques they have been taught at a local beauty spot.

Learners feel safe as a result of the care and support from staff and the effective training staff provide on how to keep safe. Learners know who to contact if they have concerns about their safety. When concerns arise, staff deal with these sensitively and effectively.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum for each subject is tailored to meet local, regional, and national needs. They are able to do this because they have an intimate knowledge of the land-based economy and employment opportunities. In all subjects, the curriculum is designed effectively to develop the high-level skills employers expect. The well-chosen curriculums also help 16- to 18-year-old learners progress to better jobs. For example, learners studying on a level 2 horticulture course progress from casual garden labourer jobs to permanent gardening posts.

Most teachers take account of what learners know when they start their course and design a curriculum that builds effectively on this knowledge. They plan their courses effectively so that learners securely understand new concepts before learning more complex, detailed course content. For example, in horticulture, learners develop their skills in cultivating plants and trees by learning different

methods, such as root and hardwood tree cutting. Subsequently, they move onto more-complex methods such as spreading evergreens.

Teachers are highly qualified industry experts. Most teachers maintain their professional practice outside of college and as a result have highly current industry knowledge. They use this effectively to plan a challenging curriculum and to provide effective teaching. This includes carefully choosing activities that allow learners to repeat, practise and master the skills they have been taught. For example, learners in construction used the skills and techniques their teachers taught them to renovate a college building to a high standard.

Teachers teach their learners and apprentices well. They ensure that learners and apprentices are confident in their practical work and learn from their mistakes. For example, maintenance operations learners initially built a wall that was not straight or level. Following useful feedback and encouragement, they rebuilt the wall confidently and successfully.

Learners and apprentices demonstrate high levels of respect for their peers, teachers, and the work environment. They are smart and articulate and gain a sense of pride from being a learner or apprentice at the college. Teachers act as effective role models by demonstrating the professional standards that learners need for employment. As a result, learners quickly learn to behave in a way their industry expects. Teachers successfully develop their learners' confidence by encouraging them to ask questions that deepen their understanding.

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve the apprenticeships they offer. This includes reducing the range of apprenticeships and focusing on a small number that serve the local land-based economy. The curriculums for all apprenticeships are well planned with highly effective links between the time apprentices spend in work and in training. Consequently, apprentices develop the knowledge and skills they need to be competent employees and to take on more responsibilities within the workplace.

Leaders and managers have developed a curriculum for the adults studying part-time courses in horticulture which prepares them extremely well for securing employment. For example, some learners have set up their own thriving gardening businesses and others have gained employment at National Trust properties. All these learners complete a valuable horticulture qualification, with most achieving a high grade.

Learners are provided with an effective tutorial programme that teaches them about living in modern Britain. This includes teaching them effectively about the risks they face from radicalisation and extremist views and how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

Leaders and managers know the quality of their courses and, when necessary, take effective action to make improvements. For example, leaders have improved apprenticeships by revising the curriculums and monitoring apprentices'

experiences closely throughout the year. They listen carefully to what apprentices and employers think is working well and what needs improving. As a result, the vast majority of apprentices are now swiftly developing substantial new skills and knowledge and employers value the apprenticeship.

Governors use their expertise to create a culture of positive challenge for and scrutiny of the senior leaders. They work effectively with the college leaders to create a college community in which staff and learners feel valued and are proud to be part of. They have an ambitious vision for the college. Governors offer operational support where needed on key strategic priorities, such as capital builds. Governors are well versed in most strengths and development areas.

The vast majority of learners and apprentices are motivated, attend well and arrive punctually for their sessions. Teachers mostly monitor attendance closely and deal with non-attendance effectively. However, on a very small number of courses, teachers do not set high enough expectations of attendance and do not follow up absences well enough. For example, for learners on functional skills mathematics level 2, there are few consequences when learners do not attend. As a result, their attendance is poor and not in line with their vocational course.

Too few learners make good use of the high-quality careers service and adult learners and apprentices do not consistently get specific careers advice and guidance that is most relevant to them. Learners with education, health and care (EHC) plans do not routinely get the advice they require to understand fully the opportunities open to them when they finish their course. As a result, these learners are not able to make informed choices on what to do next.

Teachers do not ensure that the curriculum develops learners and apprentices' English skills sufficiently. Learners and apprentices understand the importance of mathematics, but do not fully see the relevance of English. For example, teachers do not consistently teach learners on animal management courses to use grammar and punctuation correctly. As a result, these learners are not being fully prepared for future higher-level courses.

Teachers of learners who have high needs and study on foundation programmes do not set high enough expectations of what their learners can achieve. As a result, they have not developed a curriculum for these learners that enables them to make good enough progress. For example, until recently, leaders and managers did not provide these learners with external work placements or expect teachers to set challenging targets. Having identified the deficiencies in this area, leaders and managers swiftly took the remedial actions necessary to make rapid improvements.

Leaders and managers do not provide teachers of learners with special educational needs with the continuous professional development they need to fully adapt their teaching for these learners.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have produced sensible and comprehensive safeguarding policies which outline relevant activities and processes to help keep learners safe. Staff use these effectively to provide learners with the support they need. Leaders have established valuable links with relevant agencies and use these to keep up to date with new issues and challenges. Staff who are responsible for safeguarding are well trained and deal effectively with any safeguarding concerns.

Learners and apprentices have a strong understanding of health and safety in the workplace. They learn about the dangerous nature of the land-based sector early in the curriculum and put this knowledge into practice well throughout their course.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders need to improve the quality of foundation programmes so that learners who study on these are taught the skills they need to progress rapidly to the next stage of their education or training.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that all learners and apprentices, including learners with EHC plans, receive unbiased and high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance.
- Leaders and managers must ensure all learners develop further their English skills.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that all teachers are trained on how to effectively support learners who have high needs.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130655
Address	Kingston Maurward Dorchester Dorset DT2 8PY
Contact number	01305 215000
Website	www.kmc.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Luke Rake
Provider type	Specialist further education college
Date of previous inspection	24 October 2017
Main subcontractors	The Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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