

Inspection of The College of Richard Collyer

Inspection dates:

4 to 7 March 2025

Overall effectiveness**Outstanding**

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

Information about this provider

The College of Richard Collyer is a sixth-form college located in Horsham, West Sussex. It specialises in teaching students aged 16 to 18 in academic and vocational subjects. At the time of the inspection, there were 2,647 students studying at the college. Of these, 2,450 were students aged between 16 and 18 studying A levels, T levels or level 3 vocational courses. Eleven students were in receipt of high needs funding. There were also 197 adult learners studying English, mathematics and professional courses at the college in the evening.

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

Students enjoy studying at the college and value the social networks they quickly form. Students behave exceptionally well and highly value the very positive, productive and supportive learning culture at the college. Students aged 16 to 18 benefit from excellent teaching, where staff use their in-depth knowledge and experience of their subjects to bring teaching to life. Students are able to practise their emerging knowledge and skills and make mistakes without fear of failure due to the safe learning environments staff have created.

Students benefit from the extensive contact staff have with employers. They gain important insights into the subjects they learn through positive interactions with employers. Students studying A-level psychology learn about the latest research drivers in mental health after talking to practising clinical psychologists. Students benefit from hearing from professionals, and from opportunities to practise and refine their knowledge and skills on high-quality work experience placements.

Adult learners attend good courses on which they learn the skills they need to gain jobs in their local area. Adult learners who are new to the country gain useful spoken and written English skills that enable them to become independent and confident in their everyday lives. For example, they learn to communicate directly with their children's teachers. Adult learners receive the support they require to progress to university, move closer to the job market or gain a promotion. However, the proportion of adult learners who achieve their functional skills qualification is too low.

Students have an excellent attitude to their studies. They arrive to class ready to learn and participate in learning activities, and classroom conversations are focused and purposeful. Students are highly attentive to what staff and other students say. They value the opportunity to work with their peers, which they do supportively and very respectfully. Students are highly motivated and work hard and are focused on achieving their goals.

Students feel safe at college and know how to report any concerns, confident that they will be taken seriously. They value the welcoming, safe and secure campus that leaders have created.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders and managers engage effectively with employers and other stakeholders to understand local, regional and national skills needs. Leaders work with key partners such as FE Sussex and the S7 Consortium of sixth-form colleges to understand and shape how they collectively meet key skills priorities in the region. Leaders are working very closely with the local authority to submit an application to establish a multi-academy trust. However, the partnership has not routinely focused on the planning of the curriculum offer to align with the council's skills priorities.

Managers work closely with higher education institutions to appreciate fully, and teach students, the knowledge and skills universities demand from their applicants. Teachers on the access to healthcare course adapt teaching to focus on primary and ethical research methods following advice from partner universities to better prepare students for their next steps. Managers have established employer representative boards in many subjects to understand stakeholders' needs and to inform what and how they teach each curriculum. Teachers of the T level in digital production, design and development now teach students coding using specific software following advice from employers in the region. A local hotel hosts 'Discovery Days', where travel and tourism students participate in skills training workshops in areas such as housekeeping, customer service and mocktail making. The hotelier group also gives students access to its training materials to help them develop their hospitality and wider employability skills.

Leaders and managers, including governors, articulate a clear understanding of how they meet skills needs and evolve the curriculum offer to meet these demands, for example introducing T-level qualifications, A-level accounting and courses such as English for speakers of other languages and digital functional skills taught to adults in the evening.

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

Leaders have put in place consistently high-quality learning programmes that are very closely aligned with the needs of their students and the communities they serve. Staff plan and teach their courses to make sure that learning builds on what students know and can do. They ensure that students have a very secure understanding of the fundamental aspects of a subject before introducing more challenging topics. A-level psychology students learn how to debate effectively before they apply this knowledge when debating topics. For instance, adult learners who speak English as an additional language initially learn essential everyday language and skills, such as how to greet people and the names of different foods, before they use this knowledge to order food in a restaurant.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers use a range of very effective teaching strategies to devise interesting, challenging and highly relevant activities. Teachers check students' understanding very thoroughly. They ask questions to the group and follow up with relevant, targeted and probing questions to check, challenge and extend students' learning very successfully. Where students make errors, teachers are very quick to provide corrective feedback. Teachers provide students with thorough and comprehensive feedback that accurately identifies what they do well and where they need to improve. Students use this information effectively to improve the standard of their future work.

Teachers link theory to practice and model the use of subject terminology very effectively. For instance, teachers of A-level psychology refer to the training of puppies as an example of operant conditioning and positive reinforcement. Teachers support students to use technical vocabulary appropriately and fluently. Teachers of

A-level mathematics make sure that students use the correct technical language in the correct context. Students acquire new knowledge and skills very effectively and confidently use specialist language.

Teachers use the information they gain from assessments to inform future learning activities exceptionally well. Teachers of GCSE English accurately identify where students do not have a secure grasp of a topic and ensure that they revisit it to consolidate students' recall and understanding. In this way, teachers rapidly close gaps in students' knowledge.

Staff are highly ambitious for all students. They use their in-depth understanding of the interests, future aspirations and support requirements of students with high needs to devise learning programmes closely tailored to their needs. Students with high needs develop essential personal, social and communication skills that enable them to pursue their future aspirations. They grow in confidence and become increasingly independent. In this way, they are prepared exceptionally well for their future life and adulthood. They achieve their final assessments and gain the highest grades in line with their peers.

Staff provide excellent support for students. Where students do not initially understand what they are being taught, teachers spend time to revisit topics to ensure students have a secure understanding. A very high proportion of students aged 16 to 18 pass their final assessments, often achieving high grades such as A* to B on their A level. Most students move on to further learning or work. A high proportion secure a place at their first-choice higher education institution, many at universities that have high entry requirements.

Staff help students to develop important skills and knowledge and acquire behaviours important for work. A-level photography students are highly skilled in their use of creative software and techniques such as collage, tearing and burning to enhance their work. Travel and tourism students develop skills and behaviours needed for the workplace. They are polite and attentive. Students learn the essential customer service skills needed to work in the hospitality sector. The standard of students' work is very high.

Students participate in the full, rich and challenging curriculum that helps them balance academic study and social pursuits. Students benefit from an extensive and high-quality enrichment programme that gives them opportunities to further extend their subject knowledge or explore new interests, such as juggling, film club, crochet and sports teams. Students who compete in sports competitions receive individualised support through the college's elite athletes programme, where they receive help relevant to their sport, such as nutrition and injury prevention. Students acquire positive attributes, such as self-belief and confidence, that empower their future success.

Leaders and staff provide a programme of high-quality careers information, advice and guidance that supports students to make informed decisions about their next steps in education and employment. Students are supported very well by staff with

their applications to university and know about the different careers open to them when they finish their education. Students are well prepared for their next steps in learning or work.

Leaders have implemented a range of comprehensive and thorough quality assurance processes to understand the effectiveness of their provision. Leaders focus on the education they offer and are quick to intervene when courses fall below their very high standards. Leaders undertake internal and external quality reviews of courses, supported by other college leaders in the region. They are quick to implement any recommendations. Leaders intervene to make improvements, including through targeted professional development for staff. This helps to continuously improve the provision.

Leaders benefit from effective oversight from highly skilled governors. Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the future of the college. They recognise the importance of the college to the region and make sure the decisions they take are in the community's best interests.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130847
Address	Hurst Road Horsham West Sussex RH12 2EJ
Contact number	01403 210822
Website	www.collyers.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Mr Dan Lodge
Provider type	Sixth-form college
Dates of previous inspection	30 November to 3 December 2021
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal curriculum, 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

Richard Kirkham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Roland White	His Majesty's Inspector
Colin Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Dowson	Ofsted Inspector
Jo-Ann Henderson	His Majesty's Inspector
Jai Sharda	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025