

# Short inspection of Fairfield Farm College (Fairfield Farm Trust)

Inspection dates:

30 April and 1 May 2025

## **Outcome**

Fairfield Farm College (Fairfield Farm Trust) continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

Fairfield Farm College is an independent specialist college on a 26-acre farm site offering residential and day provision. At the time of the inspection, 128 learners with learning difficulties, disabilities, and complex needs were studying vocational training programmes from pre-entry level to level 2. The curriculum focuses on preparing learners for adulthood. Learners can choose to study hospitality, business, health and social care, and land-based studies where appropriate. Of these, 118 learners were studying functional mathematics and English.

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

Learners develop the skills they need to progress to adulthood. Learning support assistants (LSAs) and tutors provide effective individualised support. They use zones of regulation to support learners in identifying their feelings, to help learners to participate in lessons and to develop new skills, such as when participating in a project to construct benches for the farm.

Learners become independent over time. Tutors teach them mathematics skills, such as units of measurement. They practise using these when making meals, following instructions, initially oral, and moving on to following visual prompts and then independently reading a recipe.

Learners develop the confidence to use the skills they have learned in lessons. They work confidently in the college café and can explain what they are doing while serving customers and taking payments.

Learners feel safe and understand how to stay safe in college. For example, learners working on the farm understand the need to keep gates closed to ensure animals do not escape and harm learners or visitors.

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

Leaders have implemented a curriculum that focuses on preparing learners for adulthood. A personalised approach to learning linked to vocational qualifications helps learners prepare for independent living and employment when they leave college.

Tutors use learners' starting points, including those identified in education, health care plans, to set sensible targets for learners' progress. In most cases, they use their knowledge and understanding of the learners they work with to provide helpful individualised support. This support helps learners develop life and work skills tailored to their diverse needs. However, in some cases, these targets are not sufficiently challenging, and a few learners do not progress as quickly as they are able.

Tutors use various teaching strategies to support learners in completing classroom tasks. These include 'first, next, then, and finally' visuals to explain what will happen in the session. In a few instances, tutors do not use these visuals well, and worksheets are overly complicated for learners who cannot complete these activities with their usual levels of support.

LSAs use questioning effectively to enhance learners' understanding and recall. In equine therapy, they provide clear prompts, drawing out learners' knowledge by asking probing questions. However, on occasion, they complete tasks for learners, which limits learners' independence.

Almost all learners participate in work-related activities or work experience. Around half have taken part in external work placements linked to their interests, such as hospitality and animal care. As a result, an increasing number of learners enter paid employment when they leave college. However, learners are not routinely encouraged to explore different work experiences outside the vocational areas offered by the college and their initial career choices.

Leaders have suitably rigorous quality improvement measures in place to provide them with a clear understanding of the curriculum's strengths and weaknesses. They undertake activities such as curriculum area reviews that focus on the quality of teaching and learners' progress. Leaders use information from these activities to improve the quality of teaching quickly.

Leaders recently refreshed the board of trustees. The new trustees have expertise in education for learners with high needs, public funding, and human resources. Trustees understand the strengths and areas for improvement, and they support and challenge managers to make improvements, such as introducing new level 2 courses and increasing learners' participation in work experience.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Improve the teaching practice of tutors, to ensure that all learners experience consistently high-quality teaching.
- Ensure that learners complete their own work, where possible, so that they have the opportunity to secure their understanding of what they have been taught.
- Extend vocational training and work experience opportunities beyond hospitality and land-based subjects, to allow learners to understand the full range work opportunities available to them.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131875
<b>Address</b>	43 High Street Dilton Marsh Westbury Wiltshire BA13 4DL
<b>Contact number</b>	01373 823028
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://ffc.ac.uk">http://ffc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Graeme Athey
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent specialist college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 December 2019
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since Fairfield Farm College (Fairfield Farm Trust) was judged to be good in December 2019.

The inspection team was assisted by the 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

Sharon Dowling, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Esther Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Hannah Hancock	Ofsted Inspector

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