

Sparsholt College Hampshire 2017

The College is still in "good shape" despite the continuing gloom hanging over public funded services generally. 75% of our student population is 16 to 18 years old and, despite a demographic dip, the number of students attending from that age group this year is virtually identical to last year. The College clearly makes a significant and positive impact on the lives of these young people and it is always gratifying at the end of year celebrations to have such encouraging feedback from parents and young people, with many young people wishing to progress to the next study opportunity, including Higher Education, at Sparsholt.

The College also has a very significant number of Apprentices who are employed in local businesses within Hampshire and further afield. The success of our students is not only their success, but is also an important factor in maintaining a sustainable financial position for Sparsholt College, where the situation in other colleges continues to be very difficult.

During the last academic year the College received an inspection of under 18-year-old Residential Student Services from Ofsted and it was pleasing that the "Outstanding" judgement reflected how responsibly the College cares for students and supports positive behaviours.

The number of subsidised coaches and buses coming to the campus continues to reflect the demand from our students and provides a very sustainable way for over 900 young people to access the specialist services of the College, on a daily travel to learn basis from their homes throughout Hampshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire. The number of 17 and 18 year olds who drive to college continues to be very low. We have some students who travel three hours per day, which is a clear indication of the extent to which we are seen as a college which really meets their needs and where the courses we provide, generally speaking, cannot be accessed elsewhere.

Our emphasis on sustainable land management, and particularly renewable energy, continues as an important strategic ambition for the College and resonates with the skill set requirements which we know that many young people will be required to have, in working in a diverse rural economy in the future. We will be commencing the construction of the new building, 'The Hampshire Centre for the Demonstration of Environmental Technologies' over the next few months.

Sparsholt College was awarded, 'Green Business of the Year' (sponsored by Winchester City Council) in the Winchester Business Awards in 2016. The award recognised the many layers of activity the College has undertaken to reduce its carbon footprint, supported by adherence to a Quality Standard (ISO 14,001) and college staff have been providing information and advice to other Hampshire businesses on the extent to which particular sustainable technologies have been instrumental in this award, in order to encourage other businesses to take-up these same opportunities.

The College is working closely with Ecotricity on a particular aspect of renewable energy, the production of bio-methane gas – an alternative to fossil fuel methane. Ecotricity are committed to establishing a Community Liaison Group for this project, which will involve representation from Sparsholt Parish Council and others in the area. The purpose of this is to listen to and respond to any concerns which are raised with them in terms of the construction and operation of that facility. There continue to be delays to the publication of

Government 'Regulations' which Ecotricity requires before proceeding and no certainty as to when this is likely to be received.

The College decided not to operate the 'Lambing Days' in 2017 for a variety of reasons, not least because of the immense popularity of that event in the previous year and the vast numbers of cars attending at a time of year when off-road parking is not possible. Notwithstanding this, the much more manageable sized 'Bunnies and Chicks' weekend was a great success and we look forward to the Countryside Day, both of which provide opportunities for students to interact with the public and develop effective communication skills, which their future employers really value.

The Farley Nursery, who occupy land on the campus, have had a very successful third year at their "OFSTED Outstanding" Yurt Nursery which appears to have proved a big hit with parents and children alike.

Tim Jackson - Principal