

# Support into Employment

## Harrison College

Harrison College is different from a traditional Sixth Form or Further Education College as we are based in a small, professional environment on a business park. We are a specialist business, enterprise, and employability post-16 education provision for students with Autism, Asperger's, and special educational needs. We provide a challenging and future focused environment with the aspirations of the student at the centre of all that we do. We have 4 values which run through our culture and ethos of high expectations and challenge; lead, believe, achieve, and exceed. We place no limits on what can be achieved, 'Your Future, Your Choice' being our mantra.

We talk to our students about their learning journey and future destination from the moment that they start with us, ensuring that we are always future focused and that they are aware of all the destinations open to them from employment through to higher education. We are focused on providing an environment where learners can thrive, regardless of their previous background or barriers. We are destination driven and strive daily to push our students further towards accomplishing a secure and prosperous future. We focus on preparing young people for adult life, encompassing employability skills, work experience, social skills, and life skills. All of our students have come to us with previous challenges and possible negative experiences of their schooling or educational provision which resulted in low self-esteem, low confidence, and a belief that they would not be able to succeed or achieve educationally, employment wise or in their adult lives.

Expectations and aspirations are extremely low when all our students enter Harrison College. Our students will all be on SEN support plans or have an EHCP. We have grown from the launch in September 2019 from 3 students to 27 on roll in September 2020. This trend continued for September 2021 with 45 students on roll and this is expected to increase again to over 60 September 2022. Most of our cohort are male with over 50% with EHCP for ASD. Other needs that we cater for in our current cohort are selective mutism, severe anxiety, and mental health needs. Our cohort comes from across South, West and North Yorkshire, Doncaster, Sheffield, Rotherham, Wakefield.

Most areas are opportunity areas due to the deprivation and lack of social mobility.

### (84) Harrison College | 'Your Future, Your Choice' – YouTube

Harrison College has been recognised locally and nationally through winning multiple awards:

2021 Start Up of the Year – Doncaster Chamber Business Awards

2022 nasen 16 – 25 Provision Award

2022 Corporate Live Wire Prestige Award for Best Specialist College

2022 Highly Commended Award for Excellence in Special Needs Education – Pearson National Teaching Awards

2022 Highly Commended Award for FE Team of the Year – Pearson National Teaching Awards

Finalist for national SEND Awards 16 – 25 Provision of the Year

2022 SME Business of the Year and Success Through Partnerships – Doncaster Chamber Business Awards

All education provision has an obligation to deliver careers education however, Harrison College made a strategic decision to be different and employ a Business Development Director that dedicates time to building business partnerships to further our students understanding of the labour market around them, engage with employers and workplaces and for them to give back to their local community. Our business partners do not work with us for commercial benefits but to enhance their corporate social responsibility and create a unique pipeline for recruitment.

Our purpose for building business partnerships is to fulfil the outcomes for our learners and ensure that they all secure a realistic and suitable destination when they leave our study programme. Our business partners support us in a variety of ways, Polypipe provide three of our learners the opportunity to complete their internship with them, along with Edwards & Pearce, Wilmott Dixon and Togel to mention a few. Orb Recruitment, Reach Plc, Keepmoat Homes are among many that have given up time to deliver workshops to create awareness of the labour market within Doncaster.

Businesses also have welcomed students into their premises and showed them first hand what business has to offer, never more than during National Careers Week. Saltersgate Infant School is one of our partners that has benefited from our own CSR where students have built and continued to develop the outdoor learning space for their children.

**Business Links – Harrison College**

Harrison College students, who all are the beneficiaries of our partnerships are all entering new and exciting markets and territories. Through the work with our partners, young people that have had low aspirations and low social mobility are now enthused about new sectors of industry such as soil chemistry through the work with Professional Soil Laboratories, property management through the work with St Leger Homes and Keepmoat Homes.

Young people have the resources available to research and read about business, enterprise and the expectation of such however only through working with an employer do they truly understand the new market they are aspiring to enter, which is why our partners are key to our programme. A vital partner that volunteers time is Doncaster Chamber, young people are being exposed to the power of a business network and how that can impact upon the success of individuals and businesses. Our partners themselves are also entering new markets, not commercially but through their social responsibility and recruitment.

Businesses that build partnerships with us are often nervous about taking a neuro-diverse young person into their business and have never done it before. Through the work with us and the mentoring of the intern, they are seeing that there is a market of potential employees from the neuro-diverse community that they have not harnessed before. We have testimonials from a range of businesses that we work with; [www.harrisoncollege.co.uk/businesses/business-testimonials](http://www.harrisoncollege.co.uk/businesses/business-testimonials).

## **Innovation**

The college strategy fits with Doncaster's Education and Skills Strategy 2030 and is leading the way in a new model for Post 16 education. Harrison College is developing young people that are going to be learners for life, be open to collaboration and welcome diversity and partnership working. Not only that, but all our young people also go on an internship in the second year of their study programme into Doncaster businesses.

We measure the success of the internships via a value-added calculation based on the National Occupational Standards. We have partnerships with over 40 businesses, including Polypipe, St Leger Homes, Keepmoat Homes, Volker Rail, Bridon Ropes, Edwards & Pearce, Togel and Wilmott Dixon. The wider impact of this, is creating a young workforce that is agile and meeting the demands of

employers and being part of a solution to an aging workforce and recovery from the pandemic.

Through our partnership with NCS over 2 years our students complete a social action project that is jointly planned and delivered. In 2022 we delivered on a project for a Church of England owned Bowling Green, to bring back an unused and unloved space back to life for the good of the village community. Harrison College students have also participated in projects with Volunteer It Yourself including building decking for a café that was opened for SLD children to be able to participate in work experience.

We also support a range of charities with both fundraising, attending events and providing support where possible. In the graduating class of 2022, 75% of learners are going on to either full time employment or apprenticeships in Doncaster business, with the remaining entering Further Education.

Staff have a thorough understanding of learners' needs. They use this information with considerable care to plan learning that meets the needs and interests of learners. Teaching and learning is informed by the learner voice through a comprehensive induction programme including the completion of Avatars, All About Me forms, One page Profiles and then the regular reviewing and updating of a needs tracking sheet. Learners are regularly involved with reviewing their profiles and learning journeys.

The study programme encourages all learners to develop their independence, improve communication skills and make relevant personal choices and decisions to prepare themselves for adult life. This is delivered through the curriculum but also through enrichment, focussed weeks such as National Careers week, Literacy week, STEM week, Active Leaders CIMSPA qualification and the annual NCS closed programme.

The curriculum has been remapped for the academic year to allow for project based learning to take place each half term with a linked employability skill focus and industry.

Teachers sequence lessons in a logical order, so that learners build their knowledge and understanding appropriately. The curriculum is also mapped so that a skill or topic is taught across multiple curriculum areas, for example resilience is taught in

PSHE, Employability Skills and Work Skills at the same time so the depth of understanding is gained in the one skill.

Teachers use repetition and reference to prior learning to support learners to recall new knowledge and remember what they are doing and why. For example, in Work Skills learners are asked to identify personal skills and attributes and then in English this is referenced when construction a persuasive letter to an employer. Teachers work assiduously to ensure that teaching activities are focused on practical, real-life tasks. As a result, learners become increasingly independent and responsible. They securely develop the skills they will need for life beyond college.

In English and mathematics, teachers use the specific interests of learners to design teaching activities effectively. For example, they teach learners about ratios using transformers and angles by going out into the surrounding business park to look at architecture. Through baseline assessments it has been identified that literacy is a barrier for a high proportion of learners therefore a comprehensive literacy plan is in place including Lexia and Writing Mastery programme. Assessments and individual study programmes reflect the appropriate pace and progress of learners and are flexible to meet need.

Leaders have an extremely cohesive rationale for the provision which directly links to the needs of the learners, local community, and local employers. The curriculum is ambitious and is designed with learners at the centre and meets their academic, vocational and development needs to fulfil their aspirations for employment and independence. Leaders are responsive and are flexible to any emerging need at learner, local and national level.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for learners and enables them to be aspirational in their future lives, maximising their potential. The programme challenges the learners' perceptions of what they can do.

Leaders have made effective use of the local labour market within the learners' local community to develop an appropriate curriculum and bespoke internship opportunities. They link closely with employers and organisations such as Doncaster Chamber of Commerce, Sheffield City Region Chambers of Commerce, LEP and Careers Hubs. Learners are developing the skills and behaviours that the community and employers need. Local employers have provided opportunities for internships in Property Management, Horticulture, Site Management, Floristry,

Graphic Design and Marketing, Soil Chemistry, Game Development QA, IT Engineering, Grounds Keeping and Hospitality. Harrison College have built partnerships with Doncaster Knights Rugby Club, Doncaster Racecourse, Autism in Racing and Careers in Racing.

Learners attend work in the same shift patterns as the full-time work force so that they learn the demands of the job in a realistic work environment and are assessed monthly against the National Occupational Standards.