

Short inspection of Godalming College

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 November 2024

Outcome

Godalming College continues to be an outstanding provider.

Information about this provider

Godalming College is a 16-19 academy based in Godalming, Surrey. It became a 16-19 academy on 1 January 2018. At the time of the inspection, there were 2,521 students in learning. Of these, 1,894 students were purely studying A levels, 111 were studying only BTECs and 498 were studying a mixed programme of A levels and BTECs. Eighteen students were studying a level 2 programme in preparation to progress to level 3. Six students were in receipt of high-needs funding. The college offers 37 A-level courses. The college does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Students value the very positive and welcoming community at Godalming College. They benefit from highly knowledgeable teachers who create very calm, orderly environments that allow them to focus on their learning exceptionally well. Students work hard in lessons, willingly participate in classroom discussions and are confident in their abilities. Students enjoy their experience at the college and attend well.

Students plan and manage their own studies very effectively. They respond to teachers' high expectations very positively in lessons and in how they approach independent study. Students are highly motivated and studious and make excellent progress while they are at college.

Students participate in high-quality work-related activities. Students value highly the opportunities staff provide to widen their experiences. Leaders in A-level biology, for example, arrange for students to hear directly from employers such as the Animal and Plant Health Agency about the different career paths they could follow, such as becoming an epidemiologist. A-level psychology students benefit from hearing from university researchers and clinical and educational psychologists about their industry experiences. Students develop a secure knowledge and understanding of skills relevant to their subject and its application in a range of different settings.

Students know how to keep themselves safe. Students benefit from hearing from professionals such as the police and health workers about the local and regional risks and the importance of driving safely. BTEC information technology students

learn about cybersecurity and how to stay safe online. Students feel safe at the college and are confident that if they were to raise a concern it would be acted on appropriately.

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

Leaders offer excellent learning experiences and opportunities for their students. They have implemented a wide range of academic and vocational programmes that meet the needs of their sixth-form students. The curriculum offer is closely aligned to students' ambitions and provides them with the opportunity to be able to move on to highly desirable destinations.

Leaders organise the curriculum highly effectively and logically so that students build on what they already know and can do. Teachers start with foundational themes and then add in complex concepts. For instance, in A-level psychology, students apply their previous learning about research methodology and practice when learning about the ethics and validity of research models and how these may evolve as social opinions change. This enables students to acquire a secure understanding of important topics and apply their understanding with greater fluency and confidence.

Teachers make effective use of a range of teaching techniques to help students learn what they need to know. Teachers check students' understanding very carefully. In lessons, teachers focus well on consolidating students' knowledge. They often ask searching and probing questions that deepen and extend students' understanding. Teachers provide effective feedback on students' work that makes sure they know very precisely what they have done well and where they need to improve. Teachers have a clear understanding of the level their students are working at, and students know what they need to do to improve further.

Teachers explain concepts very clearly and concisely, often breaking down complex concepts into more easily understood components. This approach supports students' learning exceptionally well. English GCSE teachers help students to deconstruct the text they are reading. Students develop a consideration of how key words set the tone of the text, such as 'suddenly' to draw the reader's attention. This approach has an exceptionally positive impact on students' understanding.

Staff frequently revisit previously taught topics, helping students become increasingly familiar and confident in the application of their knowledge. For instance, A-level biology students apply their theoretical understanding of how enzymes can be denatured by changes in pH when conducting practical experiments in the laboratory. This helps students to commit important information to memory, so they can recall it in the future.

Staff support students to prepare for their final assessments very effectively. Teachers provide numerous opportunities for students to practise exam-style questions and consider model answers. They provide students with helpful exam technique and advice, such as writing notes in the page margin to summarise key

points they need to respond to in their answers. Students feel very well prepared for their final examinations.

Nearly all students complete their programme and pass their final assessments. Many students studying A levels achieve the highest grades of A* to B. A very high proportion of students studying BTECs achieve a merit or distinction grade. Most students move on to further study or work, with the vast majority progressing to higher education at their first-choice university.

Leaders have implemented a high-quality careers programme that is tailored to their students' aspirations. Students receive support from teachers to complete their university applications successfully. Leaders provide students with a range of internal and external careers events, where they hear from higher education institutions and employers and are informed of apprenticeship opportunities well. Leaders provide students with beneficial information and advice that helps them to realise their future ambitions. For example, where students are hoping to progress to courses such as medicine or veterinary science, which have specific entry processes such as an admissions test, they are supported to navigate these requirements successfully.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who face disadvantage. Staff work with students to identify their support needs early in their time at college and put appropriate support in place. If students are not making the progress expected, particularly those most vulnerable, leaders and staff provide additional individualised support that enables them to catch up quickly. Where relevant, staff ensure that adaptations are put in place that allow students to participate in learning fully and successfully.

Leaders, managers and trustees know the strengths of the college and where improvement is needed. Senior leaders are quick to intervene when subject performance falls below their high expectations. Trustees monitor the college's performance against expected outcomes and provide effective support and challenge to make sure there are continuous improvements. Leaders have brought about rapid improvements in areas they have previously identified as requiring further development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	145004
Address	Tuesley Lane Godalming Surrey GU7 1RS
Contact number	01483423526
Website	www.godalming.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Emma Young
Provider type	16-19 academy
Dates of previous inspection	3 to 6 December 2019

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Godalming College was judged to be outstanding in December 2019.

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

Richard Kirkham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Roland White	His Majesty's Inspector
Alun Maddocks	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Smith	Ofsted Inspector

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