

Inspection of Godalming College

Inspection dates: 3–6 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Godalming College is based on one site in Godalming, Surrey. It became a 16–19 academy on 1 January 2018. At the time of inspection, just over 1,900 students were studying on education programmes for young people and five students were in receipt of high-needs funding. The large majority of students study A-level courses, with a smaller number following vocational programmes at level 3. Just under 50 students study on level 2 vocational programmes. The college offers over 30 A-level courses, the largest being mathematics, psychology, biology and history. The college does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Students thrive in the atmosphere of industrious learning that leaders and staff have created. Students greatly enjoy their time at college and relish their education. They understand the need to work hard to meet their goals, and almost all do. Students listen very carefully in lessons and contribute to discussions with high levels of enthusiasm and passion. They discuss their learning in great depth with their peers and their teachers. They work maturely and sensibly in and out of lessons.

Students behave extremely well and act responsibly. They value the knowledge, enthusiasm and professionalism of their teachers very much. They find extra workshop sessions, which help them catch up and understand topics fully, very useful. Almost all students develop high levels of skills and knowledge during their time at college. These enable them to make strong and sustained progress with their learning and achieve excellent examination grades.

Students attend very well and feel safe at college. They enjoy greatly the new programme of enrichment sessions which improve their confidence, subject skills and understanding of employment. They benefit from their teachers' high expectations of what they can achieve.

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

Trustees, leaders, managers and staff have very high expectations of their students. They have developed an outstanding culture in the college, which concentrates very strongly on learning and developing students' independent learning skills. As a result, students are highly motivated, determined to succeed and studious. They are extremely committed to their studies. Students benefit from the extensive range of subjects, which enables them to follow the most appropriate programmes for their ambitions and aspirations. They appreciate the excellent resources and accommodation that help them learn.

Teachers plan courses very carefully and sequence the content within them logically and sensibly. They make sure that students learn the key concepts they need, to understand fully the topics that they cover throughout their courses. Students rightly appreciate the way that their learning builds clearly on previous knowledge. They quickly know more and remember more. For example, A-level biology students master key basic concepts such as molecules and cells early in the course before moving on. Students studying psychology quickly become confident and secure about using different research methods. This enables them to apply their learning very effectively.

Leaders, managers and staff set very clear expectations for their students. They have recently introduced a carefully planned '50/50' model, which emphasises the need for students to work as hard outside the classroom as inside. Students rise to these challenges and develop a very strong work ethic. They stay on task in lessons and complete homework to a high level. Students arrive at lessons punctually and

are well prepared to work. They work together respectfully and sensibly. They value the views of others and their teachers.

Staff make sure that students learn to work well together. Students speak highly of the confidence and independence they develop as a result of establishing supportive relationships with their peers. They encourage each other to learn very well. Students are strongly motivated to learn.

Almost all students produce high-quality work, with a substantial proportion producing work of excellent quality. Students can explain their current knowledge in detail. They can contextualise what they have learned previously. For example, A-level mathematics students explain mathematical methods and techniques to each other, which helps reinforce their own learning. They work together on whiteboards around the classroom, which leads to animated discussions about solutions.

Students use subject terminology fluently. Almost all rise to the challenges set for them. The proportion of students who make better than expected progress is very high, including the small number of students with additional learning needs and those following education, health and care plans. Almost all students pass their qualifications, and large numbers gain high grades. Disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive useful support both within class and from specialist support teachers. This enables them to achieve at least as well as their peers. Staff support students who fall behind or who need extra help very effectively. For example, those needing help in A-level fine art attend extra workshops, where they work individually with specialist art staff. This helps them develop their sketchbooks and improves their knowledge, skills and confidence.

Most teachers use engaging and interesting learning activities that enthuse students. In A-level chemistry, students model molecules and electrons with plasticine and cocktail sticks to understand these shapes in three dimensions. They watch useful and stimulating animated videos that clarify how bond structures work. Students studying GCSE sociology work studiously in groups to present theories on conjugal roles. They then critique other theories on this subject to consolidate and extend their knowledge. Psychology A-level students debate aggression in the media in well-structured activities where all students contribute. This leads to very high levels of debate among students, where they interrogate each other's responses carefully, share their knowledge and argue their points of view with confidence and high levels of subject knowledge. Almost all students know how to improve as a result of the clear and effective feedback they receive from their teachers.

Teachers revisit topics frequently to ensure that students remember their learning and can increasingly apply their knowledge to more complex tasks. For example, in A-level history, students recall with delight how teachers acted out Nazi concepts of 'stabbed in the back'. This helps them to remember the concept and examine the impact on Weimar unpopularity. In level 3 dance lessons, teachers use repetition and recall to help students translate the technical and theoretical knowledge they gain into their own choreography, projects and performances. They help students

analyse in detail their performances and evaluate the accuracy with which they perform.

Students benefit from useful and informative careers advice that helps them decide their next steps after college. They appreciate the help that teaching staff give them to prepare for university interviews. The small number of students who decide on alternatives to university receive useful information and support to guide their choices. Most students progress to their first choice of university or specialist college. Very many students from Godalming college go on to gain first class or 2(i) degrees. Leaders have recently introduced a new programme to enable students to learn more about the world of work, but it is too early to comment on the impact of this.

First-year students benefit greatly from the newly introduced '+Enrichment' programme. They enjoy their learning and understand how their extra study enhances their career prospects. They work together well and produce high-quality practical work. Most second-year students have not benefited from this new initiative.

Trustees, leaders and managers know the strengths of the college. They identify weaknesses quickly and take decisive and effective action. Leaders support staff very well. They take the well-being and workload of their staff into account when determining new processes and policies. Staff benefit from extensive investment in professional development opportunities, which helps them develop both their subject and classroom skills. Staff are highly positive about working at the college.

Trustees make effective use of their wide range of relevant skills and experience to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of education. They meet frequently with staff and students from across the college to seek and receive feedback. They ensure that they consider staff's and students' views when decisions are made that affect the college community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and students are safe at college. Students know whom to contact if they have safeguarding concerns. Staff, including trustees, receive appropriate safeguarding training and regular updates. They understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They ensure that students, including the small numbers of 14- to 16-year-olds who attend the college part time, understand clearly about staying safe. Well-trained safeguarding staff meet frequently to discuss safeguarding concerns. They keep detailed and comprehensive records of safeguarding cases and involve external agencies when required. Staff follow safe recruitment processes and ensure that pre-employment checks are thorough.

Provider details

Unique reference number	145004
Address	Tuesley Lane Godalming Surrey GU7 1RS
Contact number	01483 423526
Website	www.godalming.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Emma Young
Provider type	16–19 academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

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 observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Andy Fitt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Judy Lye-Forster	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Matt Atkinson	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Cox	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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