

Short inspection of Salisbury Sixth Form College

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 2022

Outcome

Salisbury Sixth Form College continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Salisbury Sixth Form College is classed as a free school for learners aged between 16 and 19. It is part of the Magna Learning Partnership Multi Academy Trust. At the time of the inspection, 349 learners were working towards a study programme at level 3. Almost two thirds of these learners study a combination of A levels, choosing from over 20 different subjects that are offered by the college. Around one third of learners study one of the level 3 vocational programmes full time in subjects such as business, health and social care, or sport. The proportion of learners studying a vocational programme, in comparison to A levels, has gradually increased since the previous inspection. Around 30 learners are retaking a GCSE or functional skill qualification in English or mathematics as part of their study programme. There are five learners with high needs who attend the college. At the previous full inspection in February 2017, the college was graded good.

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

Learners work positively in a learning environment that fosters mutual respect between all who attend the college. Learners conduct themselves appropriately in lessons and in the shared spaces around the college. However, too often, in a minority of subjects, learners arrive late to their lessons and so learning opportunities are missed. Leaders have created curriculums that meet the specific needs of the local area that the college serves. For example, learners can study a combination of A-level and vocational subjects, while also retaking a GCSE qualification in English or mathematics. Learners demonstrate positive attitudes towards their study programme and are committed to achieving well. Most learners take part in activities on a weekly basis that help them to extend their talents. For example, learners enjoy clubs such as those for drama and netball.

Learners are supported effectively by their teachers. The positive relationships created between the learners and the college staff help learners to do well in the subjects that they study. They are motivated because they understand the link

between the skills and behaviours they are taught in the classroom and how these are highly relevant to their future careers.

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

Most teachers use their high level of expertise to plan their study programmes well. They carefully consider the order in which topics are taught to ensure that learners build their knowledge over time. They provide learners with work that is increasingly demanding. They use a range of assessment practices effectively, ensuring that any misconceptions are dispelled well. In some A-level subjects, such as psychology, learners are encouraged to reflect on the feedback that is provided by their teachers exceptionally well. As a result, learners are well prepared for their examinations and final assessments, and most are successful in these. However, in a minority of subjects, such as business, the curriculum is not ambitious enough.

Teachers ensure that learners with high needs are supported effectively. Teachers apply the support that these learners need successfully, and this leads to these learners making good progress. Teachers challenge learners effectively. They use their teaching skills to promote the development of learners' independence and confidence well. For example, in software design and development, learners are encouraged to undertake the role of leader in group tasks, and they perform these roles very successfully.

Leaders help teachers to improve their teaching by providing useful training, such as the use of effective questioning techniques. For example, teachers in biology skilfully check that learners remember the information they were taught earlier in their course. Teachers undertake professional development that is pertinent to their subject, and highly relevant to the type of study programme that they teach. For example, in psychology, teachers have developed a high level of knowledge in A-level examination assessment. They use this information to inform and adapt the curriculum successfully.

Learners know how to access the specialist careers support available to them at the college and they make good use of it. Learners gain a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities that exist for future study at a higher level. They are supported well through the university application process by staff. As a result, around two thirds of learners progress to training at a higher level. Learners are also supported well with information about progressing to an apprenticeship or into employment.

Governors and senior leaders have a clear vision for the college and its position in serving the city of Salisbury. Since the previous inspection, leaders have maintained the college's strengths. They have taken effective action to deal with the weaknesses that inspectors had identified. Leaders ensure that their learners are provided with encounters with the world of work. However, not all these activities are used meaningfully enough to help raise learners' aspirations, such as in work-related activities.

Leaders provide support to teachers to raise the standard of teaching further and to enable learners to achieve their full potential. However, in a minority of subjects, teachers do not do enough to help learners consolidate their learning or challenge learners effectively. Consequently, learners lack the direction they need to help them to improve their knowledge and understanding.

The curriculum taught to some learners has been interrupted. Too many learners have had aspects of their course disrupted by staff absences. Leaders have acted by making staff changes to help provide learners with better continuity. However, leaders have not yet fully resolved the impact that this has had on learners.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained on current issues facing their learners and recent changes to legislation. They have a team of appropriately trained staff to act as points of contact for safeguarding. Managers have undertaken training in safer recruitment practices. Learners feel that their tutors are approachable, so they are happy to ask them for help with problems. When learners raise a concern, staff deal with it well.

Staff keep learners up to date with matters relating to safeguarding, radicalisation and extremism. However, too many learners have not learned about these topics in enough detail.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that all learners receive an ambitious curriculum, so that they raise learners' aspirations through high-quality learning opportunities, such as using work-related activity more meaningfully.
- Leaders need to identify and rectify ineffective teaching, and resolve the adverse effect that staff absence has on learners more swiftly, so that all learners benefit from high-quality teaching of the curriculum.
- Managers should ensure that there is a stronger focus on improving learner punctuality to lessons, so that they are giving learners the greatest possible opportunity to achieve positive outcomes.

Provider details

Unique reference number	140621
Address	66–78 Tollgate Road Salisbury Wiltshire SP1 2JJ
Contact number	01722 597970
Website	www.salisbury6c.ac.uk
Principal	Ben Hillier
Provider type	16–19 free school
Date of previous inspection	8 to 10 February 2017

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Salisbury Sixth Form College was judged to be good in February 2017.

The inspection team was assisted by the head of college, 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

Matt Hann, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lowenna Bradley

His Majesty's Inspector

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