

Inspection of East Surrey College

Inspection dates:

6 to 9 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

In early February 2019, East Surrey College, incorporating Reigate School of Art, merged with John Ruskin College to form the East Surrey College Corporation (trading as Orbital South Colleges). East Surrey College last received a full inspection in December 2014. At this time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness as good. This was confirmed by a short inspection in October 2017. John Ruskin College was inspected in October 2017 and was judged as requiring improvement.

Orbital South Colleges provides a range of vocational, further and higher education courses as well as apprenticeships. At the time of the inspection, Orbital South Colleges had around 2,500 16 to 18-year-old students on education programmes for young people, 950 adult learners, 800 apprentices, 230 students with high needs and 175 14 to 16-year-old students. They had around 25 students on supported internships, in a mixture of direct and subcontracted provision.

Students were based at four main locations. The East Surrey campus in Redhill, Surrey had around 2,400 learners, the John Ruskin campus in Selsdon, South Croydon had around 730 learners and there were around 260 16 to 18-year-old students in subcontracted provision with the Academy of Contemporary Music in Guildford and Birmingham.

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

Too many students do not behave appropriately in communal areas of the East Surrey campus. Staff do not challenge poor behaviour effectively. For example, some students vape inside the building or play very loud, distracting music. Groups of students block corridors and do not move to let people go past. Consequently, leaders and staff do not ensure that the conduct of students in communal areas of the college matches the higher expectations teachers have for behaviour in classrooms.

Staff do not encourage students to attend consistently and so their attendance at learning is too low. Consequently, students with low attendance are not as well prepared for their next steps.

The substantial majority of students develop their skills confidently and competently. Level 1 motor vehicle students learn to use tools such as tabletop vices safely. Students with high needs follow recipes accurately and reproduce those dishes at home with their families. As a result, most students successfully complete their courses and are ready for their next steps.

Most students benefit from well-considered tutorial and enrichment programmes. These help them to improve their study skills and prepare for their next steps. For example, students at the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) are taught about substance misuse, motivational skills and the importance of good mental health. Students on study programmes, adult students and students with high needs benefit from effective careers guidance.

Leaders have put in place a range of opportunities for students to involve themselves in the wider life of their communities as active citizens. For example, most students with high needs studying life skills courses volunteer at a local 'baby bank' for vulnerable families. Members of the Student Union raise money to buy sanitary products for patients at the local hospital. Consequently, many students become respectful and empathetic to the needs of others within their local communities.

Almost all students and apprentices feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe, including online. Students at the East Surrey campus appreciate the presence of security staff in some areas of the college and the use of CCTV recording.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders work highly effectively with local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) to understand and contribute to meeting regional skills needs. For example, they have close links with the EM3 LEP and are currently working with them and other further education providers in the region on several large projects. These include building

skills in the repair and maintenance of ultra-low carbon vehicles and in the retrofitting of houses with low carbon technology.

Leaders coordinate well with local employers to ensure that students receive careers advice and guidance that directs them to opportunities where there are skills needs. Leaders work with the Careers Enterprise Company, work experience and enterprise coordinators and local and regional employers to match students with opportunities in different sectors where employers need specific skills.

Leaders and staff work with disadvantaged communities effectively to understand their needs and to design courses that match these well. For example, they have worked with local councils and charities to design and run courses for individuals with limited knowledge of English to build their language skills and confidence. As a result, many of the students who have completed these courses in college or in the community have progressed to employment in hospitality, care or retail.

Leaders, managers and teachers ensure that in most areas stakeholders are involved well in the design of the curriculum. For example, leaders have worked together well with a large employer to design a bespoke work-based academy programme. As a result, students have found employment across a range of roles in the construction sector. In a small minority of courses, while employers and industry specialists are used as visiting speakers, leaders and managers have not yet involved them as effectively in the design and development of the curriculum.

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

Teachers do not give apprentices feedback that helps them understand their strengths and areas for development effectively. As a result, most apprentices are not clear about the specific skills and knowledge they need to work on, and they develop these too slowly.

Although apprentices receive information about careers at the beginning of their training, they do not continue to benefit from this in the rest of their apprenticeship programme. Consequently, apprentices are not aware of how they can use their knowledge, skills and behaviours in other roles or sectors of employment.

In almost all subject areas, leaders and managers have planned and sequenced courses logically. For example, level 2 beauty students learn how to carry out consultations with clients before they provide treatments such as waxing. Property maintenance operative apprentices learn how to prepare wall surfaces before applying wallpaper to different sizes and shapes of wall. As a result, students and apprentices learn the most important skills and knowledge first so that they can understand more complex topics later.

Most teachers use assessment well to evaluate what students have learned and to plan further learning. For example, ACM students benefit from the feedback on their performance practice from their teachers, other students and audiences from

outside the college. In health and social care, teachers use information from an introductory assignment to identify gaps in students' learning so that they can set them individual targets. Consequently, most students use feedback from their teachers to improve their work.

Teachers in most subject areas ensure that students understand the career pathways available to them in detail. For example, ACM students benefit from visits by speakers from the music industry. Teachers ensure that Access to Higher Education in Nursing students receive clear information about careers in the healthcare sector. Because of this, the substantial majority of students know what to do to achieve their goals.

Leaders, managers and teachers plan and implement suitable encounters with the world of work. For example, students studying creative arts courses visit film studios and galleries. Hair and beauty students attend international salon trade events. As a result, students benefit from being familiar with relevant employers and workplaces.

Almost all teachers provide students with high needs with effective support. For example, teachers use information they have about level 1 motor vehicle students to place them in groups that minimise behavioural issues. Staff teaching life skills slowly reduce the detail of the visual cooking instructions that they use with students with high needs to help them develop independence. Because of this, students with high needs develop skills and independence effectively over time.

A high proportion of students, including students with high needs, achieve their personal learning goals and qualifications. For example, almost all supported interns are successful in gaining employment or becoming part of the Surrey Choices adult work scheme. As a result, these students move on to their next steps successfully.

Staff prepare students on adult learning programmes for employment, university study and further education effectively. For example, managers work with Job Centre Plus staff to refer adult job seekers to suitable courses quickly. Access to Higher Education in Nursing students benefit from visits to a local university hospital to learn more about careers in nursing. As a result, adult students are prepared well for their next steps.

Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in all parts of their provision. Leaders work closely with subcontractors to monitor and evaluate the quality of their work with students. They use this information to prioritise and make improvements.

Although leaders and governors have rightly identified that students' behaviour and attendance need to be improved, they do not have an accurate overview of weaknesses in these areas. For example, students and apprentices' attendance at many level 3 courses remains low. Students' behaviour in wider areas of the East Surrey campus is worse than it is in classrooms. Leaders' actions to improve attendance and behaviour have not yet had the intended impact.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A well-qualified and appropriately experienced team of safeguarding leads manages safeguarding concerns. They record and share information effectively. They recruit staff appropriately. The safeguarding lead ensures that staff receive suitable safeguarding training.

Leaders and managers have taken effective steps to understand the potential risks to students from sexual harassment and abuse. As a result, they have implemented additional training for staff in these areas.

Leaders have implemented sensible and appropriate processes to ensure that 14 to 16-year-old students are safe on all campuses.

Leaders have recently implemented an online system for reporting and managing safeguarding concerns. Consequently, they now take a more consistent approach that is better adapted to the volume of safeguarding concerns across the college group.

Leaders work with a range of local safeguarding partners across both Surrey and Croydon to support students effectively. As a result, they are well informed about the local risks and threats in each area. Leaders follow safer recruitment procedures and take a systematic approach to ensure that these are implemented comprehensively.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should set higher expectations for the behaviour of students in communal areas of college sites, particularly at the East Surrey campus. Leaders and staff should monitor and challenge students' conduct in these areas more closely than they currently do.
- Leaders should set higher standards for students' attendance and punctuality. Leaders, managers and teachers should take more assertive action to challenge low attendance in courses at all levels.
- Leaders should ensure that teaching staff give apprentices feedback which helps them to understand and improve their work.
- Leaders should take swift action to ensure that all apprentices receive effective careers advice and guidance that supports them with their next steps.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130824
Address	Gatton Point London Road Redhill Surrey RH1 2JX
Contact number	01737 772611
Website	www.esc.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Jayne Dickinson
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2014
Main subcontractors	Academy of Contemporary Music The Learning Curve Limited Workers' Educational Association Surrey Choices

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal for curriculum and standards, 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

David Towsey, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Montserrat Perez-Parent	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam Hanmer	Ofsted Inspector
Carole Wilson-Frizzell	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Griffin	Ofsted Inspector
Nicholas Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Bates	Ofsted Inspector
Clifford Shaw	Ofsted Inspector
Jai Sharda	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Cox	Senior His Majesty's Inspector
Emma Leavey	His Majesty's Inspector
Roger Pilgrim	Ofsted Inspector
Fadia Clarke	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2022