

Godalming College

Inspection report

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Godalming College is a popular sixth form college situated in south west Surrey. The college has provision in 13 sector subject areas and around 90% of enrolments are students aged 16 to 18 on full-time level 3 programmes. Over 1,500 students aged 16 to 18 follow GCE A and AS level courses each year. Adult enrolments are around 1,350 each year, mainly on part-time courses. The mission of the college is to 'develop the individual through successful learning'. In 2005 the college was awarded a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in social care and in 2006 was awarded Beacon status. The college business training services division specialises in work-based learning in social care, services to business and a growing Skills for Life provision. In collaboration with five partner schools, the college offers part-time vocational programmes and

enrichment modules providing a taste of advanced level to over 150 Year 10 and 11 pupils. GCSE pass rates are high in Surrey secondary schools and there is good progression post-16 to full-time education and training. Unemployment locally is low and the college is situated in an area of some affluence.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Outstanding: Contributory Grade 1</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

2. The overall effectiveness of provision is outstanding. Godalming College is very well led and students' success rates have improved. Both adult learners and students aged 16 to 18 achieve high success rates at the college. Pass rates for students aged 16 to 18 at GCE A and AS level have been consistently high for the past four years. However, completion rates for adults on a minority of part-time courses, although improved, are low. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding. The college is highly inclusive and works well with partners and employers to meet the needs of the local community. A very wide range of A and AS level subjects is offered along with a developing vocational provision at levels 2 and 3. Part-time courses for adults in care and services to business contribute to widening training opportunities locally. Teaching and learning are outstanding and imaginative lesson observation arrangements have brought about real improvements. Guidance and support for students are also outstanding and the identification of, and support for, students with additional learning needs is a particular strength. Accommodation and specialist resources are excellent and the college is in a strong financial position. Equality of opportunity is very well promoted. Leadership and management are outstanding and self-assessment is well developed and thorough. Realistic targets are set and met at all levels in the college.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

3. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. Success rates have improved and very high pass rates at A level have been maintained. Teaching and learning have continued to develop and teachers value the flexibility to incorporate more individual support into their curricula. Quality assurance is rigorous and had brought about improvements in success rates and teaching and learning. Management information is accurate and secure and has facilitated communication across the college. Managers have a clear understanding of the college's key strengths and areas for improvement. Inspectors found that the college self-assessment report and related action plans were self-critical and accurate.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

4. The effectiveness of steps taken to improve is outstanding. The accommodation has been considerably improved by the addition of an extensive, modern information learning centre, sports hall and a performing arts building. Adult students on NVQ programmes are thoroughly monitored and their progress well reported. Retention on additional qualifications has improved and targets set in tutorials and self-assessment reports are specific and measurable.

Key strengths

- outstanding leadership and management
- high success rates across the college in 2006/07
- outstanding achievement of GCE A and AS programmes
- very good progress made by level 3 students aged 16 to 18
- outstanding teaching and learning
- excellent subject and additional learning support helping students achieve
- good and relevant staff development
- very productive partnership working and links with local employers.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- insufficient development of the virtual learning environment in some curriculum areas
- variable practice in group tutorials for 16 to 18 year olds.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

5. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates for students at all levels improved in 2006/07. Overall success rates for 16 to 18 year olds at levels 2 and 3, which account for 90% of all enrolments, have been above the national average for the past three years. Level 1 success rates for 16 to 18 year olds improved markedly over the past three years and in 2006/07 were above national average. Success rates for adult learners, at levels 2 and 3, also improved and were above the national average in 2006/07. However, success rates for adults taking level 1 programmes declined in 2006/07 and were below the national average. GCE A and AS level pass rates, taken mainly by 16 to 18 year old students, have been outstanding for the past four years. More than half the students obtained A or B grades at A level in 2006/07 and 41 subjects registered 100% passes. Level 2 pass rates, at GCSE, on BTEC first programmes and the access to A level courses for 16 to 18 year olds, were good. Achievement rates for adults have improved and were well above the national average in 2006/07; for example, learners recorded good pass rates on NVQ programmes and entry level Skills for Life tests. Retention rates for 16 to 18 year olds have been above the national average for four years. However, retention rates for adult learners, mainly on part-time NVQ courses, are below the national average due to learners not completing programmes on time.
6. Students on A and AS programmes make very good progress with their studies. Achievement is consistently above that predicted by prior attainment. In addition, progression to further education, employment and on to higher education is very good. School pupils who take part-time courses at the college also make good progress. They achieve well, for example, on the first diploma in business and the foundation award in caring for children.
7. Students achieve very high standards of work in their lessons and thoroughly enjoy their studies. They benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities and are highly successful in competitive sports competitions and in music and drama.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

8. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are very well planned with clear outcomes and incorporate an excellent balance of theory and practical activities. Teachers place a very strong emphasis on meeting individual students' needs and ensuring they achieve their maximum potential. Teachers devise learning activities that are fun and interesting. Students work purposefully and make good progress. College managers have been innovative in introducing '4 + 1' to teaching programmes. This system, popular with staff and students, allows teachers to devote one timetabled hour each week to supporting individuals and small groups. Curriculum teams have responded positively to the flexibility this allows.

9. The quality of learning resources is outstanding. Teachers use information learning technology (ILT) to very good effect. Students have good access to computers across the college and in the classroom. The college's information learning centre, which is a very attractive environment with excellent resources, is very well used by students. Some curriculum areas have excellent intranet sites, with interesting activities for students and good links to external websites. Others are still at an early stage of development and the college self-assessment recognises the need to further develop the virtual learning environment. The quality of assessment is good and, in some curriculum areas, excellent. Students receive very useful peer and teacher feedback to help them improve. Some curriculum areas are well advanced in using a good range of assessment methods, including self-assessment and electronic marking. NVO assessment and internal verification have been greatly improved through the introduction of electronic portfolios.
10. The college has continued to improve the quality of teaching and learning through a rigorous and thorough lesson observation system. The decision to put more emphasis on carefully evaluating the key strengths and weaknesses for each lesson has been very successful. Teachers receive evaluative and highly developmental feedback. Observers fully incorporate students' views, their progress and the quality of their work within observations. The college shares good practice examples from the teaching and learning observations effectively through the intranet.
11. The college uses an appropriate range of initial assessment tests and interviews to identify learners' additional support needs, which are very promptly diagnosed. Students receiving additional learning support are very well supported to help them achieve.
12. Educational and social inclusion and the college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students are outstanding. Data and feedback are analysed well to help inform decisions about the curriculum. The college offers a good and diverse range of subjects, particularly at A and AS level. The college has increased the range of vocational courses, including programmes for 14 to 16 year olds. Students aged 14 to 16 achieve well and there are very good progression rates onto mainstream college courses. The college has introduced a more cohesive and flexible level 2 programme combining BTEC First Diplomas with GCSEs. The college has very strong recruitment from their links with the local federation of schools. The NVO programme and the CoVE in care have developed significantly to meet the needs of local employers. The college has worked exceptionally well with external partners to offer a foundation degree and management programmes for the health and social care sector.
13. Students benefit from very good enrichment opportunities. Students' participation in enrichment activities is good; for example, in sport where they have been very successful in local and national competitions, and in music and drama where regular concerts take place. Students participate in a wide range of community and charitable activities and clubs. Most courses have interesting and relevant visit programmes that complement students' studies. Most

vocational courses include work experience, adding value and relevance to students' learning.

14. Support and guidance for students are outstanding. Prospective students have very good opportunities to help them make appropriate choices about the college and their courses. The website and prospectus contain very clear and useful course, entry and progression information. Induction is effective in preparing students for college life. AS level students receive timely and specific progression advice following their module results. Arrangements for higher education advice and support are excellent. Specialist help is available for students applying for courses in medicine, veterinary science, law and engineering.
15. Students have good access to welfare and financial support. The quality of personal and subject support is very highly effective. The college has improved the links between subject teachers and personal tutors through the introduction of an electronic record system. Students receive effective reviews of their progress at least once each term. Parents and carers are appropriately informed about students' progress. The college has significantly improved the tracking and reviewing of NVQ learners' progress since the last inspection.
16. Personal tutors receive very good and regular training to support them in their role. The college's tutorial programme is linked well into the themes of Every Child Matters, but not all tutors follow this programme. Some students do not value the importance of group tutorials. A very high emphasis is placed on supporting university applications through the tutorial process.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Outstanding: Grade 1

17. Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior managers and governors work very well together to give a clear strategic direction to the college. Governors are very supportive of the college's work and are kept well informed by senior managers. Communication is good and staff morale is high. Highly effective management at all levels has resulted in improved outcomes for the students. Excellent progress had been made in addressing all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Student success rates have improved and A level results continue to be outstanding.
18. Management information is good and is well used across the college to improve achievement and retention rates. Managers and course tutors have good access to the information they need to improve performance. Curriculum teams are developing attractive intranet learning materials for students to access at college or from home. However, the college recognises that this is an area where more work is needed.

19. Partnership working continues to be a major strength of the college. The college works well with schools and other colleges in the area to provide a range of opportunities for 14 to 16 year olds, part-time NVQ training for adults in care and business and access to A level for those who need more time to prepare for level 3 study. In addition the college is a key partner with local businesses, schools and Surrey sixth form colleges.
20. Procedures for observing teaching and learning are understood by staff and a wide range of opportunities are provided for them to improve their practice. Self-assessment is well developed and accurate in identifying strengths and areas of improvement. Quality assurance procedures are robust and have brought about improvements in teaching and learning and curriculum management.
21. Financial management is strong and there is highly effective investment in resources and accommodation. With outstanding success rates the college provides very good value for money. Recent investment in a £10 million building programme has resulted in a sports hall, new teaching rooms, a striking information learning centre, a performing arts block and a central social space for students. Teachers are experienced and well qualified. Specialist teaching and learning resources are of good quality and students have access to well designed study spaces.
22. Equality of opportunity is outstanding. Staff training focuses well on promoting equality and on raising students' awareness of cultural and other differences. The college meets its obligations under race equality, disability and gender equality legislation. The performance of different groups of students is monitored and all areas of the college are accessible to those with physical disability. The college is a safe and inclusive environment. Health and safety arrangements are well managed. Child protection policies and procedures are in place and staff have received appropriate training. Criminal Record Bureau checks are carefully recorded.

Learners' achievement

Tables 1 – 3:

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03/04	105	63	67	-4	133	68	57	11
	04/05	281	30	64	-34	217	54	56	-2
	05/06	101	58	71	-13	224	59	56	3
	06/07*	181	85	N/A		66	30	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04								
	04/05								
	05/06			N/A				N/A	
	06/07								
NVOs	03/04	1	100						
	04/05								
	05/06								
	06/07			N/A				N/A	
Other	03/04	108	64	63	1	519	83	79	4
	04/05	288	32	53	-21	923	71	78	-7
	05/06	116	62	63	-1	1,212	90	91	-1
	06/07*	186	83	N/A		160	43	N/A	

* college data

N.B. Three year outcomes are used 03/06 (where 06/07 data incomplete) or 04/07 (where 06/07 data judged complete and reliable).

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	03/04	729	46	74	-28	225	44	54	-10
	04/05	547	81	73	8	178	26	56	-30
	05/06	496	80	78	2	133	61	64	-3
	06/07*	462	86	N/A		93	69	N/A	
GCSEs	03/04	326	81	77	4	21	33	58	-25
	04/05	434	83	78	5				
	05/06	416	80	81	-1				
	06/07*	310	92	N/A				N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	13	77	73	4				
	04/05	18	83	73	10				
	05/06	9	89	80	9				
	06/07*	66	89	N/A				N/A	
NVQs	03/04	9	22	47	-25	106	63	66	-3
	04/05	24	42	41	1	90	51	54	-3
	05/06	25	60	48	12	134	60	59	1
	06/07*	24	54	N/A		86	69	N/A	
Other	03/04	387	18	41	-23	229	56	59	-3
	04/05	93	80	81	-1	122	18	43	-25
	05/06	55	87	85	2	56	88	91	-3
	06/07*	68	62	N/A		77	87	N/A	

* college data

N.B. Three year outcomes are used 03/06 (where 06/07 data incomplete) or 04/07 (where 06/07 data judged complete and reliable).

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	03/04	4,969	86	80	6	158	25	57	-32
	04/05	5,215	87	82	5	224	32	59	-27
	05/06	5,401	88	83	5	253	59	65	-6
	06/07*	5,481	89	N/A		315	69	N/A	
A/A2 Levels	03/04	1,899	91	89	2	7	86	86	0
	04/05	2,118	90	87	3	10	100	70	30
	05/06	1,982	91	92	-1	7	71	78	-7
	06/07*	1,872	94	N/A		2	50	N/A	
AS Levels	03/04	2,787	84	78	6	5	40	54	-14
	04/05	2,787	85	78	7	6	50	57	-7
	05/06	3,039	87	80	7	3	33	53	-20
	06/07*	3,185	87	N/A				N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	239	86	68	18	2	50	50	0
	04/05	273	79	70	9	8	100	64	36
	05/06	304	81	79	2				
	06/07*	10	20	N/A				N/A	
NVQs	03/04	13	31	32	-1	70	23	46	-23
	04/05	8	38	24	14	166	29	45	-16
	05/06	13	46	46	0	184	64	66	-2
	06/07*	17	47	N/A		275	68	N/A	
Other	03/04	36	19	41	-22	100	27	36	-9
	04/05	27	33	43	-10	61	39	57	-18
	05/06	70	70	72	-2	73	51	51	0
	06/07*	398	85	N/A		51	78	N/A	

* college data

N.B. Three year outcomes are used 03/06 (where 06/07 data incomplete) or 04/07 (where 06/07 data judged complete and reliable).

Equality and diversity

2006-07	All Ethnic Groups	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese/Other	Mixed	Not Known	White
Enrolments	7075	170	73	44	144	8	6636
Completion rate (%)	91	94	86	82	92	100	91
Achievement rate (%)	94	93	97	100	93	88	94
Success rate (%)	86	88	84	82	86	88	86
Withdrawal rate (%)	9	6	14	18	8	0	9

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