

# Salisbury Sixth Form College

16–19 academy

## Inspection dates

8–10 February 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Governors and college leaders have successfully created an ethos of tolerance, respect and high aspirations for learners.
- They have quickly and effectively responded to the need for additional, local sixth-form provision for learners who have a wide range of academic achievement at the end of key stage 4.
- College leaders have developed very strong strategic links with schools and stakeholders, which they have used well to establish quickly a high-quality option for school leavers.
- A high proportion of learners complete and achieve their qualifications, especially on vocational courses.
- Most current learners are making good progress towards achieving the grades expected of them. Most learners in 2015/16 made the progress expected of them; however, some female learners on A-level courses did not achieve the grades of which they were capable.
- Staff nurture and promote good study habits in their learners; as a result, learners are hardworking, use their time well and improve their confidence. They develop good study skills and the skills they need to progress to further study.
- The pastoral and academic support from staff ensures that a high proportion of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities complete and achieve their qualifications.
- Teachers develop learners' subject knowledge and skills effectively by using their detailed knowledge of their learners to plan and provide good teaching and learning.
- Teachers monitor their learners' progress closely; their marking and feedback are detailed and ensure that learners have a clear understanding of the progress they are making.
- Learners receive good guidance on their options for their next steps and a very high proportion go on to university or apprenticeships, or take their first steps into a career.
- Leaders and managers ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are mostly of a high standard but do not provide sufficient guidance to some teachers on how to improve their teaching or ensure that all learners are making sufficient progress.
- Too few learners have the opportunity to develop work-related skills.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Salisbury Sixth Form College opened in September 2014, with the first learners completing their studies in 2016. It offers 22 A-level courses and a small range of vocational qualifications that learners study alongside A levels. A very high proportion of learners study A levels. On average, learners studying A levels have slightly lower levels of prior achievement than those in other schools and colleges. In May 2016, the college moved into new, purpose-built facilities near the city centre.
- Salisbury has a wide range of post-16 provision, including independent schools, single-sex grammar schools, a further education college and a university technical college. A large number of learners travel out of Salisbury for their post-16 education. Employment rates are high in Wiltshire, with a high proportion of employment in professional and technical jobs. A high proportion of pupils in Salisbury leave school with five GCSEs at grades A\*–C including English and mathematics, but the academic achievement of 18-year-olds in the area is weaker.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Provide effective professional development and support to managers and teachers to identify and implement improvements to raise the standard of teaching further, and enable all learners to achieve their full potential.
- Provide more opportunities for learners to develop work-related skills through work experience and greater contact with local employers.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- College leaders have a very clear vision for the college that aims to tackle the gaps in provision in Salisbury for learners who have a wide range of academic achievement at the age of 16. When establishing the college, they worked closely with local 11 to 16 schools to establish a curriculum and ethos that are congruent with those of local schools.
- College leaders have quickly established links with other schools in Salisbury in order to develop high-quality courses. For example, teachers take part in professional development that is jointly organised with other schools and colleges, and pupils in some 11 to 16 schools benefit from extra lessons taught by teachers from the college. The numbers of local 16-year-olds applying to the college is increasing each year as a result of the strong relationships college leaders have developed with schools and the college's growing reputation for the quality of its courses.
- The college provides a wide range of courses that are well suited to learners' aspirations. Teachers provide a good range of activities that develop learners' personal and study skills and provide opportunities for them to develop interests outside their academic subjects. An increasing proportion of learners take part in work experience, but college leaders do not yet provide enough opportunities for all learners to develop sufficiently the skills they will need for employment.
- The college provides functional, well-designed classrooms and social spaces that learners enjoy using. The college is characterised by a calm and productive ambience. The building is designed well to reduce noise, giving learners the chance to sit in open spaces to work and relax without disturbing each other. The college's information technology facilities provide learners with quick access to the internet and a wide range of web-based resources that they use well in their study time.
- College leaders ensure that learners treat each other fairly and respectfully and raise learners' awareness of diversity well. They have quickly established a strong ethos in which learners respect each other; one learner said, 'It's a bit like a family,' and commented on the high levels of trust between learners.
- Learners provide useful feedback on a wide range of matters and college leaders act on this feedback to improve the college. For example, managers have provided more quiet study space and changed the curriculum and organisation of personal, social and health education to include topics that learners had requested. Managers have recently improved learners' opportunities to contribute their views directly to college leaders by enabling some learners to take part in senior leadership and governing body meetings.
- College leaders and managers evaluate the quality of every aspect of learners' experience well. They have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning as a result of regular visits to lessons and frequent discussions with learners. They support teachers to work together to improve their teaching and learning. For example, teachers have investigated the causes of slow progress by some female learners. As a result, they have introduced a motivational programme to help learners reflect on and improve their own learning. Through this work, which learners value, groups of teachers are successfully improving female learners' progress. They monitor closely the performance of

disadvantaged learners and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and ensure that both groups achieve high levels of success in examinations.

- Leaders and managers closely monitor the effectiveness of most of the actions taken to improve teaching but, in a small number of cases, managers do not provide sufficient advice and guidance to teachers on how to improve their teaching.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Governors have successfully established a college that is well placed to improve the achievement of 16–18-year-old learners in Salisbury and to reduce the number travelling long distances to receive an A-level education. They have formed strategic alliances with local stakeholders, such as governors of local schools, and used these alliances well when establishing the college to ensure that their plans and aspirations matched those of the local community.
- Governors are effective in holding senior managers to account for the quality of provision. They monitor learners' progress closely and have a strong focus on ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment are of a high quality.
- Members of the board reflect well on how best to discharge their duties. As a result, they have ensured that members have a good range of skills to support and challenge senior managers and co-opt members with specific expertise when necessary.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. When safeguarding incidents have arisen, college leaders have dealt with these well. They have quickly developed useful partnerships with local safeguarding organisations and improved their safeguarding practice through advice and guidance from other organisations.
- Staff have been trained appropriately on how to protect learners from radicalisation and extremism. Senior leaders understand the risks faced by learners and continue to review and improve their arrangements to mitigate these risks.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They carefully plan activities that successfully develop learners' understanding of the subjects they study. For example, in a physics lesson, the teacher gradually developed learners' ability to plot a graph of velocity and acceleration against time through increasingly complex exercises. Learners responded well to these challenges and made good use of mini-whiteboards to draft and redraft the graphs.
- Teachers use innovative approaches in many subjects to enthuse learners. In computer science, learners develop skills in programming very well as a result of the challenging problems they attempt to solve in small teams. In one lesson, the teacher successfully encouraged learners to be creative as they sketched designs on whiteboards around the wall before beginning to write code. In a psychology lesson, the teacher acted out aspects of case studies, which helped learners to remember the content effectively.

- Most teachers prepare learners well for examinations by concentrating on developing their examination techniques. Teachers explain clearly the standards of work learners need to produce in order to achieve the highest grades possible. This effectively helps learners develop skills such as those of analysis and evaluation.
- Teachers develop learners' study skills well and provide supervised private study sessions where learners apply these skills well. In such sessions, learners work hard to meet deadlines and reinforce their understanding of topics.
- Teachers in many subjects provide web-based resources that support learners' independent learning well and give learners clear guidance on the topics to research in preparation for lessons. Web-based resources are used particularly well by learners in media studies to broaden their knowledge.
- Teachers assess learners' progress well through good-quality, timed assessments based on past examination questions. As a result of these assessments, teachers have a good understanding of learners' strengths and weaknesses and use this to plan activities that help learners make further progress.
- Learners receive good advice and guidance before they start their course and during their first few weeks. These ensure that they are on the courses best suited to their aspirations.
- Teachers help learners to settle into the college, and manage learners' transition from GCSE-level work to the demands of A levels well. Teachers provide good support to learners who arrive at college without grades A\*–C in GCSE English or mathematics.
- Teachers provide detailed feedback on marked work and highlight where answers are incorrect, which helps learners improve the quality of their work. However, in a small proportion of feedback, teachers do not clearly indicate how learners can improve their answers. Where learners achieve lower than expected grades in mock examinations, teachers produce clear action plans that help learners improve.
- Teachers ensure that learners develop their literacy skills through the use of glossaries, clarifying key terminology, and by teaching learners how to write academic essays well.
- Learners clearly understand the grades they should aim to achieve and are making good progress towards achieving these. However, information on learners' progress is too complex to indicate clearly to managers, parents and carers the progress learners are making on their course and does not consistently give an accurate picture of learners' progress.
- Teachers do not provide sufficiently difficult work or set sufficiently high standards for a minority of learners. As a result, learners in a small number of subjects, including photography, art, applied science and law, are not progressing fast enough or achieving the grades of which they are capable.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Learners are hardworking, punctual and attentive in lessons. They enjoy their time in college and turn up well prepared for their lessons. Most learners improve their confidence well through developing their study and organisational skills. They develop

high but realistic aspirations as a result of the good pastoral and academic support that their teachers provide. Most learners achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

- Learners confidently discuss and assess each other's work, which improves their understanding of the topics covered and helps them enrich their own written work.
- Teachers support learners who are at risk of underachieving well. Learners whose studies are affected by stress or mental health difficulties receive effective support. For example, they learn how to improve their levels of calmness so that they can focus better on their studies through activities provided by teachers, including yoga and sleep improvement strategies.
- Learners work safely and pay good attention to the correct use of personal protective equipment when undertaking experiments. Learners feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe online.
- Learners demonstrate respect and tolerance for one another, their teachers and their learning environment. The student council represents the views of the learners effectively and helps them to develop an understanding of democracy. The broader programme of activities organised within the college, including assemblies and days focused on specific topics, is effective in developing learners' understanding of these fundamental British values.
- Learners gain a good understanding of topics concerned with living in a diverse society and teachers provide a good induction to the risks learners may face from radicalisation and extremism. Some teachers follow these topics up in subsequent lessons well to ensure that learners gain a deeper understanding of the implications of these topics for their daily lives, but a small number do not.
- Learners are well prepared for their next steps into university, apprenticeships or employment. Learners understand clearly the opportunities available to them and they are well supported in their applications to university. A growing number of learners take part in work experience, particularly those studying vocational courses, but there are still too few opportunities for learners to develop sufficiently the skills they will need when employed.

## Outcomes for learners

**Good**

- A very high proportion of learners complete and achieve their A level and applied qualifications. In 2014/15, too many learners left before the end of their AS-level courses. The proportion who completed AS levels increased in 2015/16 and, at the time of inspection, only a very small number of learners had left the college before the end of their course. There are no significant gaps in achievement between different groups of learners.
- All learners who did not have grades A\* to C in GCSE English or mathematics when joining the college improved their grade in 2015/16, and a high proportion achieved grade C or above.
- Most learners who pass their qualifications achieve the grades expected when taking into account their prior achievement at GCSE. A very high proportion of learners on applied courses achieve high grades, particularly in sport, health and social care, and applied

science. On A-level courses, a slightly lower proportion of female learners achieved their expected grades than male learners.

- Learners mostly produce work of a good standard, while learners in a few subjects produce work of a very high standard. For example, learners studying English literature produce excellent work by analysing texts intensively and using sophisticated syntax. On a small number of applied courses, learners are not provided with sufficient opportunities to explore their subject beyond the minimum required to pass assessments.
- The majority of learners in 2016/17 are making the progress expected of them and achieving appropriate grades in assessments. In health and social care, and sociology, learners are making better than expected progress, but in visual arts, law and applied science, their progress is slower than expected.
- A high proportion of learners go on to courses at university. A very high proportion of these learners take subjects in higher education related to the courses they studied at college and which are suited to their plans for a career. Other learners progress into apprenticeships or jobs with clear career prospects. The college effectively prepares learners who defer their entry to university for a year to use their time wisely to develop their personal and work-related skills.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	140621
Type of provider	16 to 19 academy
Age range of learners	16 to 18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	199
Principal	Simon Firth
Telephone number	01722 597970
Website	<a href="http://www.salisbury6c.ac.uk">www.salisbury6c.ac.uk</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	0	0	0	239	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Not applicable							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and parents; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Steven Tucker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andy Fitt	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jim Grant	Ofsted Inspector
Roger Pilgrim	Ofsted Inspector

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