

Inspection of Franklin College

Inspection dates: 14 to 17 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

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

Information about this provider

Franklin College is located in Grimsby, in north east Lincolnshire, and provides courses for young people, including those with high needs, and adults. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,672 students aged 16 to 18, of whom 408 were on A-level courses, 671 on vocational courses and 565 on mixed programmes. On adult learning courses, there were 373 students, the majority enrolled on courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and functional skills English and mathematics. There were 26 students with high needs. The college works with two subcontractors to deliver a specialist 16 to 19 study programme and online distance learning for adults.

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

Students demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning, attend well and are prompt to lessons. They are keen to understand how they can improve their work. They revisit taught content and access additional written resources and videos to enhance their knowledge in their own time at home and in the numerous study spaces in college.

Leaders and managers have invested significantly in the facilities at the college in order to provide very effective learning spaces for the student community. Students benefit from access to a wide range of spaces in which to study independently, in addition to bright and comfortable social areas. Staff have created a campus that has a very warm, friendly and inclusive atmosphere. As a result, students enjoy their time at college and show great respect for the surroundings in which they learn.

Students enjoy participating in the excellent range of personal and professional development (PPD) activities available to them, and the take up is very high. The PPD programme offers students the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in areas such as debating, journalism and mathematics or to participate in sports, performance and the arts. All PPD activities have links to careers and help students to develop their talents and interests in preparation for their future lives.

In very useful tutorial sessions that cover a comprehensive range of issues, staff address challenging topics, including the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism, healthy relationships and the signs of coercive control. Students listen carefully, answer questions maturely and demonstrate high levels of respect towards staff and each other. As a result, they develop their understanding of life in modern Britain well and know how to apply British values such as respect and tolerance in their day-to-day lives.

Students on adult learning programmes experience a rich range of learning and training activities. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds receive support to develop the skills and knowledge that they need to progress on to further study, to access higher education or enter employment. For example, pre-entry English programmes tackle very low levels of literacy in the communities served by the college, which significantly helps adults in their daily lives. Their studies help adult learners to live fuller lives, socially, educationally and economically.

Students feel safe in the college. Staff have fostered a calm and safe environment where students can focus on learning. Staff, including senior leaders, are highly visible and approachable should students have any concerns. Students understand well potential risks such as county lines, drug abuse, drink spiking, domestic violence and neglect. They very much appreciate the thought and care that staff take to ensure their well-being.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders engage very well with a range of stakeholders to understand the immediate skills needs locally, as well as the emerging priorities. Leaders contributed to the development of the local skills improvement plan and continue to engage frequently with civic stakeholders and employers to review the needs of the many small and medium-sized enterprises which dominate the local economic landscape.

Stakeholders commend leaders' dedication to understanding the skills that employers need. For example, leaders invite employers into the college to meet students at working lunches and breakfast meetings and involve employers in the many sector-specific academies that they have developed. Consequently, students hear first-hand about the skills that employers need to help the local economy to grow.

Leaders at the college, in close collaboration with other education leaders, ensure that a coherent local offer is available to students aged 16 to 18 and adults, including those most vulnerable and at risk of not being in education, employment or training. They work with leaders from a local multi-academy trust and a general further education college to review their respective curriculums and ensure that there are ambitious pathways that are accessible to all, irrespective of starting points. Leaders collaborate very effectively with leaders and academic staff in local universities to develop students' skills in readiness for progression to higher education.

Leaders and managers make good use of the stakeholder intelligence that they gather to inform the design and implementation of a number of areas of the curriculum. Where employers and stakeholders work closely with leaders, they effectively modify units, develop course materials and contribute to teaching. For example, teachers in A-level computer science require students to routinely test their own code prior to project completion, as they would when working with clients in industry. Teachers in engineering co-teach sessions with employers from local windfarms to enrich the teaching of skills needed in renewable industries. However, stakeholder involvement in the design and implementation of the curriculum is not yet embedded in all courses.

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

Leaders and managers have a very clear overview of the quality of the provision at the college, including at the subcontractors. Staff carefully monitor each student's performance and progress and, when this does not meet expectations, involve parents and/or carers, where appropriate, and put in place effective improvement actions. Leaders accurately identify where provision falls short of meeting their high standards and take effective action to improve it. Managers have reviewed and successfully enhanced the adult learning curriculum by, for example, ensuring that

teachers cover the basic curriculum components comprehensively before teaching more advanced topics. They have communicated clearly their expectations to staff, and adult students now make very good progress in developing their knowledge and skills.

Leaders and managers recruit teachers who are very experienced and well qualified. They ensure that teachers' industry knowledge remains current through a highly relevant professional development programme. The programme also includes topics such as the enhancement of teaching skills, instructional coaching and mentoring, which help teachers to continue to be effective practitioners.

Teachers plan and sequence the curriculum very well. In A-level psychology, teachers start with the research methods that underpin the course content. They then provide opportunities for students to use their new knowledge to explore different psychological approaches and theories in detail. On ESOL courses, teachers ensure that students learn and understand the core elements of how language is structured through reading and communication, before moving on to enabling students to apply this in their written work. As a result, students are able to build their knowledge and skills in a logical way and become much more confident in their abilities.

Students benefit from attending very interesting and informative lessons. Teachers use a range of effective teaching techniques to ensure that students have time to consolidate learning and transfer key concepts to their long-term memory. In A-level computer science, teachers conduct gap analyses of students' performance on topic tests to inform their teaching and future assessments. Teachers accurately identify common mistakes and misconceptions made by students and address these through individual and whole-group activities. In A-level psychology, teachers use 'retrieval sheets' to provide a visual representation of topics to help students make links between different theories to aid their revision.

Teachers support students with high needs and additional learning needs very well. They ensure that specialist and other resources that students need are available for them, such as digi-pens, overlays and coloured paper, and they provide students with extra time to manage the demands of examinations. Students benefit from individual support throughout their time at college, including from employers when on work experience, to enable them to make very good progress and move successfully on to their next steps, which for most is to higher education and, in a few cases, to prestigious universities.

Students produce work of a very high standard and take pride in their work. They receive helpful feedback from teachers about how they can improve. Students reflect on their progress in review booklets, explore how they can develop their knowledge and skills further and set targets for their next pieces of work. They become more analytical in their written work over time and improve their grades.

Students benefit from a comprehensive careers programme. Through the tutorial and personal and professional development programmes, teachers ensure that

students are very aware of progression pathways and potential next steps. Students speak confidently about their intended destinations and how to get there. They know how to apply for university places, seek apprenticeship opportunities and write job applications and prepare for interviews. A high proportion of students progress into higher education or on to an apprenticeship. For example, students completing applied science courses take up a broad range of options that relate to regional and national skills needs. These include taking nursing and paramedic degrees, gaining employment in the pharmaceutical industries and studying towards other science, technology, engineering and mathematics qualifications.

Governors are very well qualified and experienced in a range of sectors, including the armed forces, retail, finance, law, manufacturing and education. The committee structure enables governors to have a comprehensive view of the strengths and areas for improvement at the college. Governors provide supportive challenge to senior leaders to drive forward improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130586
Address	Chelmsford Avenue Grimsby DN34 5BY
Contact number	01472 875000
Website	www.franklin.ac.uk
Principal, CEO	Peter Kennedy
Provider type	Sixth form college
Date of previous inspection	25 to 28 September 2018
Main subcontractors	The Skills Network Grimsby Town Football in The Community Sports and Education Trust

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the interim 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 visiting learning sessions, scrutinising students' work, seeking the views of students, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Joanne Stork, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Glenise Burrell	His Majesty's Inspector
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