Information about Varndean Sixth Form College

Varndean Sixth Form College is a popular and successful Sixth Form College based in Brighton with over 1810 students aged 16 to 18. The College draws largely from the Brighton and Hove schools but also from other East and West Sussex schools. A small number of students come from the independent sector and from overseas. This all makes for a lively and cosmopolitan mix of students.

Varndean's mission is 'through the quality of its provision and support for a diverse community, to encourage and inspire all its students to fulfil their potential'.

Curriculum and Achievement

Varndean Sixth Form College specialises in the provision of academic and general vocational education to the 16-19 age group. At level 3 it offers over 30 A level subjects alongside a choice of vocational qualifications. Varndean is the only sixth form college in the area to be selected as an International Baccalaureate World School offering a popular IB Diploma Programme. At level 2 about 140 students follow various vocational courses and a range of core GCSEs.

In addition to examination courses and tutorial work, a broad programme of enrichment activities is available to students, including sporting activities, art, drama, music, political and environmental issues, work experience and volunteering. There is an extensive range of day, residential and international trips and good support for students to organise their own clubs and societies. A thriving Student Union enables students to contribute to the development and improvement of the College as well as the organisation of social and fund-raising activities. The work of the College in the areas of environmental and international education has been recognised through national awards.

The College has a distinguished record of achievement over a number of years. In 2025 The College recorded an impressive A Level pass rate of 98%, with over 50% of students securing top grades of A*-B and a quarter achieving a coveted A* or A grade, the highest ever. Over threequarters of students achieved grades between A*-C, reflecting a consistent rise in academic performance.

Ofsted Inspection 2024

An Ofsted inspection in 2024 confirmed Varndean as once again as a good college, and outstanding in many areas. Inspectors comment that:

- Students enjoy learning and are motivated to succeed. They are studious and fulfil the high expectations set by staff.
- Students are enthusiastic about and enjoy greatly the wide range of additional activities available to them.
- Many students make a valuable contribution to their communities. They learn to be advocates for sustainability and the environment.
- Students are caring and demonstrate thoughtfulness, consideration and altruism.
- Leaders provide students with a programme of high-quality careers information and advice to help them make informed choices about their futures.
- "tudents benefit from sessions with alumni, where they explain pathways into careers, such as those in the civil service.
- Leaders and managers work effectively with a broad range of stakeholders to identify and respond positively to local and regional skills needs.
- Students flourish in the vibrant and highly inclusive culture staff create. They are respectful towards others, value equality, and embrace diversity.
- Students care deeply for one another and demonstrate the values they need to thrive at Varndean College and in modern Britain.
- Students feel safe at college and have a good awareness of how to stay safe in the community and online.
- Students are confident that staff will deal quickly and effectively with any concerns they have about their safety and well-being.

Staff

The College staff numbered 255 in Mar 2022, consisting of 124 full and part-time teachers and 131 full and part-time support staff. The Principal, Donna Marie Janson is supported by a Deputy Principal and two Vice Principals.

Curriculum subjects are organised into five areas each led by a Head of School, with two Assistant Heads of School. Programme Leaders are responsible for individual subject areas within the schools. Teaching staff are supported by departmental technicians, IT technicians and administrative staff. The Additional Support Team provides in-class support and individual support to students. Support staff teams include HR, Finance, Marketing, Registry and Premises.

There are extensive opportunities for professional development and effective processes for induction of new staff.

Support and Guidance

In addition to the support through their academic courses, tutorial teachers provide regular one to one meetings to monitor progress and support students' progress. There is excellent additional learning support, including general support for learning difficulties, more intensive support for students with EHC plans and a well-being service. Students have comprehensive guidance and support on careers and higher education.

Varndean works in close partnership with parents. Parents have access to an on-line tracking system, receive regular up-dates on student progress, attend a series of parent's evening and are contacted whenever necessary. The college is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Accommodation and Facilities

The College's attractive building is situated on an impressive site at the head of a large green campus just 10 minutes' drive from Brighton city centre. There are views to the south over the city and to the sea.

The College's facilities include:

- STEM Centre
- Library
- Open Access IT facilities, dedicated IT based teaching rooms and networked computer access in all classrooms
- On-site canteen serving a range of hot meals, salads and snacks
- Fitness suite (available for staff and student use)
- Free on-site parking
- Extensive playing fields for organised sports

Prospective candidates are encouraged to visit our website at www.varndean.ac.uk for more detailed information regarding the College.