

# Great Yarmouth College

## Reinspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 130765

**Name of lead inspector:** Philippa Francis HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 16 March 2012

**Type of provider:** General Further Education College

**Address:** Great Yarmouth  
Norfolk  
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## Information about the provider

1. Great Yarmouth College is a medium-sized college in an area of high economic and social deprivation on the east coast of Norfolk. Courses are offered at the main campus close to the town centre. Courses are offered in almost all subject areas with the exception of social sciences, although the number of learners in several is relatively small. Most of the college's provision is government funded. The college was last inspected in November 2010 and was judged inadequate in all main aspects including capacity to improve. Of the four subjects inspected, two were graded as inadequate and two as satisfactory. A new principal was appointed in January 2011.
2. Educational attainment at 16 in Norfolk is lower than average and has not been increasing at as faster rate as nationally. Advanced level learners' prior attainment on entry to the college is much lower than typical in similar colleges. Great Yarmouth has higher than average unemployment and average wages are low. Almost all learners come from areas with lower than average social and economic deprivation. The percentage of the population of Great Yarmouth who are of minority ethnic heritage is around 2%; the percentage within the college's population of learners is a little higher.
3. In 2011/12, at the time of inspection, the college has around 2,146 learners of whom around 1,363 are aged 16 to 18 and 783 are adults. The majority of learners study full time. Around 398 learners are on employment-based courses and 187 pupils from local schools attend the college on a day-release basis.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
<b>Provision for young learners:</b> 14 to16	264 learners
Further education (16 to18)	1,205 full-time learners 807 part-time learners
Foundation learning, including	336 full-time learners 602 part-time learners
<b>Provision for adult learners:</b> Further education (19+)	267 full-time learners; 1,170 part-time learners
<b>Employer provision:</b> Apprenticeships	278 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
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	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Health, social care and childcare	3
Construction	3
Information and communication technology	3
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	3

## Overall effectiveness

- The college's overall effectiveness has improved markedly from inadequate at the previous inspection to satisfactory. Ambition and high aspirations are now central within the college and learners say how much more motivated they are. Staff morale is high. Many changes to improve provision have taken place including in leadership, the curriculum, teaching and learning and support for learners. In almost all cases, these changes have already had a positive impact on learners' chance of success; in a few, areas for improvement remain.
- Results for learners aged 16 to 18 improved strongly in 2010/11 and are average at advanced level but below at other levels. Results for adults did not improve and are too low. In the current year, many more learners have remained on their courses. The large majority, particularly younger learners, are making much better progress with some achievements already completed. Employment-based learners' results are too low. Attendance has increased

significantly and is now satisfactory. Learners make satisfactory improvement in their personal and social development.

6. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, as is the support provided for learners. A focus on improving teaching is increasing in intensity and inadequate teaching has largely been eliminated. Practical teaching is often good but theory teaching is much more variable in quality, largely because teachers' expectations of learners are often too low. Almost all guidance and support arrangements are improved and are now comprehensive. However, some processes vary too much in quality because there is not enough monitoring by managers. The curriculum provides a satisfactory match for most learners' needs.
7. Strong leadership by the principal has turned the college round. A clear strategic direction and new management provide a sound basis for improvement. Managers assess the college's strengths and weaknesses accurately; action plans are implemented determinedly and mostly successfully. Some quality assurance arrangements are insufficiently robust to reduce inconsistency across subjects. Improved financial management has saved money but recruitment onto courses is not yet buoyant enough to remove uncertainties about the college's future financial health.

## Main findings

- In 2010/11, younger learners' long course success rates increased markedly but adults' rates declined slightly. Success rates for younger learners at advanced level are average but rates at other levels are below average. Success rates for adults and employment-based learners are too low. Current learners are making much improved progress; many more have stayed on their courses and are likely to complete successfully.
- Learners' rate of attendance has increased strongly and is satisfactory. Most learners work diligently and produce at least satisfactory standards of work. In particular, learners' development of practical skills is often good and, in a few instances, very good. Success rates in functional skills qualifications increased significantly in 2010/11 to be average.
- Learners enjoy college life and almost all feel safe. Health and safety are well promoted. Vulnerable learners integrate well with their peers and confidently take part in a wide range of activities. Employability skills are developed well in some subjects but less so in others because opportunities are underdeveloped. Learners' personal and social development including their understanding of health and well-being topics is being developed satisfactorily.
- Teaching and learning have improved and are satisfactory. Practical teaching is often good and supports learners' vocational skill development effectively. However, in too many other lessons teachers do not plan activities well enough to match learners' abilities, or extend their knowledge through questioning. Sometimes the pace of lessons is too slow, too few learners are fully involved in learning and there is too little challenge for more able learners.

- Teachers' use of information and learning technology and the promotion of equality and diversity within lessons are good in a few subjects but inconsistently developed in most. The assessment of learners' work is timely and most feedback is of satisfactory quality. Examples of good assessment practice are evident in a few areas, but not shared sufficiently.
- The monitoring of the quality of lessons is more rigorous and accurate and provides a good basis for further improvement. While the large majority of teachers' individual action plans arising from observations contain clear developmental points, a minority lack detail. Managers' monitoring of actions plans varies; sometimes monitoring is too cursory to ensure that actions are implemented promptly.
- The range of courses meets learners' needs satisfactorily and suitable progression routes are available in most areas. Work-based learning has expanded. Employers appreciate the flexible provision and good support for apprentices. However, community provision is insufficient. A high proportion of foundation level learners move on positively to the next stage in their study.
- More learners gain work experience than was the case at the last inspection but opportunities remain limited in some areas. Curriculum enrichment opportunities are insufficient. Arrangements for learners to express their views are not yet working sufficiently well. Partnerships, which have a clear strategic focus relating to the area's needs, are developing well although it is too early to judge their impact.
- The arrangements for additional learning support are satisfactory. One-to-one support is good but the effectiveness of some in-class support varies, in part because of a lack of clear targets against which to measure learners' progress. Liaison between learning support assistants and teachers is not consistently effective. Learners who receive support do better than those who do not.
- The much-improved arrangements for initial advice and guidance are now good. Most learners are on the right course. Tutorials observed by inspectors were good but there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of tutorials. Policies and guidance are not yet well established. Personal learning plans vary in quality across subjects. In a few cases, these plans are of high quality but more frequently they are much less effective.
- Since the appointment of the current principal, the pace of improvement has been rapid. The principal, working with governors, has established a new strategic direction that promotes ambition and high expectations. A reorganised management structure has secured financial efficiencies and provides close monitoring of learners' experience. Communication across the college is highly effective. Senior managers use data well but middle managers are less expert.
- Governors monitor the college's progress against key performance indicators carefully and they are increasingly holding managers to account. Their oversight of a few areas lacks rigour, for example, reports on safeguarding and equality and diversity are of poor quality but this had not been challenged. Some accommodation is of high quality but some is in dire need of refurbishment.

- Improvement actions have been mostly effective in improving outcomes and the quality of provision. Actions are well supported by accurate management information. Self-assessment is largely accurate and self-critical. A few quality assurance arrangements are underdeveloped. Curriculum management is improving strongly and is mostly satisfactory or better although some managers are relatively inexperienced.

## **What does Great Yarmouth College need to do to improve further?**

- Monitor the progress of learners rigorously at all levels of management, particularly on courses identified as underperforming, to ensure that improved in-year retention and attendance are sustained. Ensure a sharp focus on the progress of adult learners and apprentices. Support managers to use data fully effectively as part of this process.
- Maximise learners' progress by ensuring teachers increase the challenge and pace of learning and learners' participation in lessons. Support teachers to make sure that activities match the level of course and learners' ability. Help them to use questions more effectively to extend and check learners' understanding.
- Disseminate the best practice in assessment, the promotion of equality and diversity and the use of information and learning technology across teaching teams in order to improve the quality and consistency of approach across subjects.
- Quicken the rate of improvement in teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers' improvement action plans arising out of lesson observations are detailed and fully implemented. Make sure that managers monitor these plans rigorously.
- Enhance learners' experiences by reviving and extending the enrichment programme, increasing the opportunities for work experience across all subjects and involving learners fully in contributing to and evaluating the work of the college.
- Strengthen the provision of additional learning support by ensuring that learning support assistants record precise targets for learners receiving in-class support and routinely measure learners' progress against these. Encourage teachers and learning support assistants to work closely in planning lessons.
- Take actions to ensure that the quality of tutorials is consistently good or better by assessing their quality through observation and ensuring that the implementation of new policies and guidance enables learners to receive their entitlement.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of personal learning plans rigorously so that learners receive consistently helpful and high quality reviews of their progress and the good practice established in a few areas can be shared with those areas where practice is in need of improvement.

- Strengthen the capacity and capability of middle managers by providing professional development aligned to their skill development needs. Develop governors' role in providing challenge to managers and ensure that reports produced on safeguarding, health and safety and equality and diversity are of high quality.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- practical lessons
- the help and support provided by staff
- the motivating and friendly environment
- the range of courses
- the Eating House
- feeling safe around the college
- the location of the college and the availability of parking.

#### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- the condition of the facilities and accommodation in a few areas
- the number of lockers available, particularly in practical areas
- the price of the food and a better range of healthier options
- the organisation of a few courses and timetables
- insufficient challenge to disruptive behaviour by teachers in a very few lessons
- access to computers
- more trips and enrichment activities including sports.

### **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What employers like:**

- the training and support provided in a few departments
- flexible arrangements for starting work-based learning programmes
- the college's help in finding apprentices
- the very recent improvement in support and communication seen in several departments.

#### **What employers would like to see improved:**

- more frequent communication about learners' progress
- more specific training offered so learners' and employers' needs are fully met.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 3**

8. Since the appointment of the current principal in January 2011, the pace of improvement has been rapid and recovery from the college's previously very weak position is notable. However, despite marked improvement, success rates remain below average. Management has been reorganised successfully, securing financial efficiencies and a much closer focus on monitoring learners' experience and performance. However, a few managers are on temporary contracts and gaps in the management of quality improvement remain. Most recommendations for improvement identified at the last inspection are being tackled, some with more success than others, in part because of the need to prioritise weaker areas.
9. Self-assessment is largely accurate and self-critical. Quality assurance arrangements are being strengthened, for example, the rigour and accuracy of the lesson observation scheme have been increased. However, some arrangements are not yet well established resulting in inconsistent quality in aspects of provision. Arrangements for budget setting and operational planning are effective, but, in part as the college has failed to meet its target for adult learners, financial uncertainties remain. Some parts of the college's accommodation require significant investment to match the newer and better equipped areas.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 3**

10. In 2010/11, learners' outcomes improved considerably. The improvement is remarkable because unresolved weaknesses in initial advice and guidance, aspects of the curriculum that were inappropriate and insufficient monitoring of learners' progress at the start of the academic year reduced learners' chances of success considerably and initial dropout rates were high. However, after the first term, a concerted effort to support learners who had stayed on their courses to achieve proved largely successful. In the current academic year, considerable further progress has been made to raise learners' aspirations and increase their success.
11. The final results for 2010/11 show a significant increase in learners' success rates on long courses from a low point in 2009/10. In particular, younger learners' success rates increased markedly; however, rates for adults declined slightly. Despite the overall increase, success rates remain below average for both age groups. By age and level, younger learners' success rates are average at advanced level where over a third of learners study, but low at foundation and intermediate level. Success rates are low at all levels for adults. Pass rates overall are close to average for younger learners but retention rates are low. Adults' pass rates and retention rates are below average. Success rates on



short courses have declined to below average. By subject, success rates are highest for arts courses, where rates are above average. In the majority of other subjects, rates remain below average. Results in functional skills increased markedly in 2010/11 and, overall, are in line with the low national average.

12. Current learners' likelihood of success is far higher. In-year retention rates are much higher than at a similar point in the previous year. A significant number of younger learners have already secured some accredited qualifications. Most current younger learners' progress is at least in line with expectations based on their prior attainment and much improved compared to the progress of previous cohorts, where too many learners underperformed. Records of progress in completing assessments show that a high proportion of learners are on track to complete their courses. Learners' standard of work, both theory and practical, is mostly satisfactory and, in a few subjects such as construction, inspectors observed some learners' work that was of a high quality. Learners' practical skills are often well developed, for example in beauty therapy, catering and health care.
13. The differences in achievement that existed between age groups and genders have been closed successfully because of targeted action to increase success rates. The numbers of learners from minority ethnic groups are too small to complete a reliable analysis of their performance compared to other groups but groups' performance is nevertheless monitored carefully. The over-large number of learners of unknown ethnicity has reduced considerably because of much more careful information gathering at enrolment. Learners in 2010/11 who received additional learning support achieved at a higher rate than those who did not, in complete contrast to previous years. This improvement is mirrored in this large group's current progress.
14. Learners enjoy college life; their attendance has improved markedly since inspection and is satisfactory. They collaborate well with their peers, teachers and support staff. A high proportion move on from foundation to intermediate levels of study and a small but increasing number move into advanced level study. Data showing learners' next steps after leaving college are not routinely collected limiting the analysis of their destinations. Learners' employability skills are developed in a range of ways but development in some subjects is much more successful than in others. Realistic work in the hairdressing and beauty salons and the restaurant helps learners experience a realistic working environment but in other areas, such as animal care, work experience is too limited. Learners contribute to the community in a range of ways including through a very successful community-based Summer Festival and through charitable work to support a local hospital.
15. Employment-based learner numbers are increasing strongly. Results for the small numbers of learners in 2010/11 increased sharply from a low point but remain below average with too few learners completing within the time allowed. The progress of the current larger cohort of apprentices has improved

with more who have already completed their apprenticeships and an increase in the number who are completing their courses on time.

## The quality of provision

## Grade 3

16. Managers accurately self-assessed the quality of teaching and learning as satisfactory. Inspectors observed lessons that ranged widely in quality and effectiveness but concluded that most lessons are at least satisfactory and practical lessons are often the most effective. In these lessons, teachers promote learners' development of relevant vocational skills to support their future economic well-being well. Several teaching teams have undergone considerable change in make-up since the last inspection; several contain a high proportion of new teachers. Managers' particular focus has been on eliminating inadequate teaching, which has been largely successful; however, not enough teachers have improved their practice from satisfactory to good. A few lessons are outstanding but this best practice has not been shared effectively.
17. In the few highly effective lessons, teachers plan carefully resulting in a high level of challenge for learners of all abilities ensuring their good or better progress. In these lessons, learners display positive attitudes to learning, participate fully and benefit from teachers supporting them to work independently. Too many lessons, however, remain satisfactory because teachers' strategies are not well enough developed and fail to match tasks and activities to learners' abilities. In these lessons, teachers often talk for too long with insufficient use of questioning techniques to check and consolidate learners' knowledge.
18. Self-assessment accurately identifies that the promotion of equality and diversity in lessons remain areas for improvement. Managers are developing the virtual learning environment to support learning well. It is being used increasingly by staff and learners. However, the effective use of information and learning technology in lessons varies. It is used well in some areas, but in others, such as health and social care, the use and availability of appropriate technology is too limited.
19. Monitoring of the quality of teaching through lesson observations is increasingly rigorous. Managers have a realistic overview of strengths and areas for development in teaching. Accordingly, staff training, including using teaching and learning coaches to support individual teachers, is more sharply focused. Observers produce individual actions plans, but these are not always detailed. Too often these plans are not implemented robustly enough to secure sustained improvement. The sharing of good practice is increasing but is currently too limited.
20. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Most learners' work is marked promptly and progress in completing assessments is tracked routinely. The written feedback

on a majority of learners' work is clear and helpful in identifying what can be improved. In a minority of subjects however, it is vague and unhelpful.

21. The curriculum meets the needs of learners and employers satisfactorily. Progression routes are available in most areas of provision. New courses have been introduced in some areas, for example in business and retail, whereas courses in some other areas have been enhanced to offer learners a wider range of skills, for example, by including a foreign language in travel and tourism. Courses which performed poorly have either been improved or removed. Work-based learning provision has expanded since the last inspection and new apprenticeships have been introduced. However, local community provision, particularly for literacy and numeracy, is not well developed.
22. Opportunities for learners to gain work experience have increased since the last inspection in some subject areas, but there remains scope for further improvement in several subjects. Opportunities for full-time learners to benefit from cross-college enrichment activities have diminished. Actions are in hand to address this but current learners feel that there are too few opportunities available.
23. The college has successfully expanded its partnerships with a sharp strategic focus on the development of skills relating to tourism, marine engineering and renewable energy. Partners speak highly of the college's approach to partnership working. However, most projects are at an early stage of development and it is too early to judge their impact.
24. A significant improvement to the arrangements for providing initial advice and guidance means that learners are now mostly on the right course. Processes have been completely transformed to ensure that the needs and interests of the learner are at the heart of the recruitment process. A welcoming advice centre is located near to the college's reception area. Staff are well trained and liaison with local schools to ensure the timely and accurate receipt of GCSE results has helped ensure that admissions to particular courses tend to be right first time.
25. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy levels is effective and support provided promptly. The number of learning support assistants has been increased. Individual support is particularly effective but, while in-class support overall is satisfactory, there is too much variation in its quality. At times, teachers and support assistant do not liaise sufficiently. Learning support assistants' records of weekly work do not include sufficiently clear targets for learners. In-year data indicate that attendance and retention for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as for those receiving additional learning support, continue to be above the college average.
26. Tutorials are satisfactory and learners feel well supported. However, managers monitoring of the tutorial programme is not sufficient to ensure that all learners receive their entitlement. Some arrangements are incomplete such as

circulation of the tutorial handbook. Personal learning plans are well established but their use is inconsistent. Inspectors observed plans ranging from those which are highly effective with well written and measurable targets to those which are incomplete.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 3

27. Working with governors, the principal has revised the strategic direction to contain objectives and targets that are well focused on raising aspirations and providing excellent learning opportunities. Senior managers' highly effective communications have ensured that staff are clear about the college's future direction. Managers, strongly led by the principal, set high expectations and provide the drive and determination needed to promote improvement. Staff have confidence in the leadership. Morale is high.
28. Changes to the management structure have been made swiftly, without incurring unnecessary costs. These changes have enhanced the quality of curriculum management which is now satisfactory in all of the areas inspected. The management of key business support functions is stronger in some areas including human resources, and data management. However, gaps in the structure, such as substantive posts in quality improvement, remain. Managers understand their responsibilities. They are held to account for high standards through close monitoring of their performance. Managers work together well, supporting each other in implementing improvement strategies, such as using data to track progress against targets. However, their level of experience and expertise varies and some need further training.
29. Senior managers have recently developed effective business planning arrangements which support them in setting and monitoring progress against recruitment targets and in ensuring that the curriculum responds to local and national priorities. Several good new initiatives based securely on careful needs analysis are in place to develop the curriculum to meet the wider local and regional needs and boost recruitment to ensure that targets are met. Course applications for the forthcoming academic year are higher than at a similar point in the previous year.
30. Governors have a good range of skills. Newly appointed members of the board have ensured that governors represent the local community better. Governors monitor the quality of the learning experience effectively through the principal's comprehensive monthly reports. Governors are well informed about the challenges the college faces and external factors which may impact on its future. However, they have not monitored the implementation of several key policies robustly. Reports on equality and diversity, health and safety, and safeguarding presented to governors do not always contain sufficient detail but have not been challenged.

31. Vetting checks on staff are carried out appropriately and recent improvements to the single central register have ensured correct recording. Staff place high priority on ensuring that learners and visitors wear identity badges, helping learners to feel safe at college. Staff and governors are trained appropriately. Staff have established effective links with external agencies to support learners identified to be at serious risk. Although all incidents and concerns are recorded appropriately, they are not always monitored robustly to analyse the benefits of the support provided for vulnerable learners. Within the constraints of its resources, outdoor areas, classrooms and social spaces are maintained appropriately to provide a safe learning environment.
32. Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily. A single equality scheme and action plan, underpinned by policies that meet legislative requirements, were developed in consultation with learners and staff. A recently reconvened and representative college group is monitoring the implementation of the policies effectively. Training has been provided for staff in understanding their roles in promoting diversity within the curriculum. Improved access to accurate management information has facilitated the identification of differences in the performance of learners. Successful actions have been implemented to close these. For example, the gap in achievement between men and women has closed. New provision has been introduced to provide opportunities for those who might otherwise not participate.
33. Managers have recently developed a new strategy for involving learners in contributing to the decision making process. Development of an active student union is well underway. While some course representatives are able to discuss their views with teachers and other staff these arrangements are not well-established. Employers' views are collected and used to develop courses which meet their needs and an employer forum is being re-established.
34. Procedures for course review and self-assessment have been recently and suitably revised. Managers are supported in making self-critical judgements. Managers have access to accurate centrally-collected data on learners' outcomes which is being used with increasing effectiveness to evaluate the quality of learners' experience and inform improvement actions. Managers monitor progress with action plans closely. Courses that performed poorly in 2010/11 have been prioritised and are showing strong signs of improvement.
35. Arrangements for operational and budget planning have improved significantly, but as the college has not met its targets for adult learners, uncertainties about the college's financial health remain. Although managers have used the limited financial resources available to make good improvements, the quality of the accommodation varies significantly and is inadequate in a few areas. Outcomes for learners have improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

## Subject areas

### Health, social care and childcare

### Grade 3

#### Context

36. The college offers courses from foundation to advanced level in health and social care, and childcare. Some 306 learners are enrolled evenly divided between these two main subjects. The large majority of learners are aged 16 to 18 and study full time. Most learners are of white British heritage and are female. Some 18 school pupils study on a day-release course. A further 19 learners attend a part-time access to counselling course.

#### Key findings

- In 2010/11, learners' success rates increased on the majority of full-time courses and are average. Success rates are high on the advanced level national diplomas in the two main subjects. However, current learners' retention rates on these courses are lower than previously. Learners' work is of a satisfactory standard; however, childcare learners produce particularly high quality displays promoting children's learning.
- Learners develop good employability skills including in teamwork, use of reflective practice and problem solving. Learners research topics confidently and the majority use information and learning technology well in support of their study. However, childcare learners cannot develop essential skills in the use of interactive whiteboards because of limited resource availability. Progression rates to further study and employment are good.
- Learners feel safe and use safe working practices consistently. Learners have a clear understanding of how to safeguard children and vulnerable adults in their care. Risk assessment of placements prior to learners' work experience is thorough and ensures the safety and well-being of learners. Appropriate criminal record bureau vetting checks are carried out.
- Health and social care learners are heavily involved in community projects. For example, learners contributed to a general-practitioner-led research project to review and improve community cohesion in a local area of deprivation. Foundation level learners support learners with complex needs from other subject areas to become fully integrated into college life.
- Most lessons are satisfactory and an increasing number are good. In more effective lessons, well-paced and wide-ranging activities fully engage learners, consolidating learning well. Good use is made of learners' placement experiences. However, too often learners are insufficiently challenged to reach their full potential. For example, teachers' questions are often undemanding and too little use is made of target grades to raise expectations.
- Learners enjoy their studies, particularly practical lessons which include group work and creative activities. Functional skills teaching along with equality and diversity themes are included within lessons to a satisfactory extent. Monitoring

records of current learners' work show that most are making satisfactory progress in completing their qualifications.

- Assessment is thorough and accurate. All assignment briefs are reviewed frequently and robust sampling of work takes place. Feedback to assessors is constructive and leads to improved assessment practice. Learners value tutors' written and verbal feedback which helps them improve. Learners use references effectively in their theory work but do not routinely record the date they access websites.
- The range of provision offered is appropriate and has good progression routes. The provision for counselling has improved through the introduction of an access to higher education counselling course in the current year, replacing the previously underperforming provision. Learners benefit from the opportunity to gain additional qualifications, for example in first aid, which enhance personal development and improve employability.
- Partnership work has developed well and is satisfactory. Good links are in place with parents and/or carers to support and encourage learners during their studies. Stronger links with employers are ensuring increased availability of work experience for intermediate and advanced level learners. Good opportunities for volunteering and supported placements are available for foundation level learners.
- Learners receive good personal support. Early and effective diagnostic testing identifies learners' individual support needs accurately. However, inconsistencies in the planning of additional learning support assistants' responsibilities in lessons mean that not all learners receive fully effective support. Learners appreciate and benefit from the regular drop-in workshops providing additional support to catch up or improve grades.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers provide clear direction to staff teams. Self-assessment is used well to identify issues and plan improvements. Action taken to improve learners' engagement in lessons is beginning to take effect. A relatively new teaching team are working well to improve the quality of provision. Staff morale is high.
- Much accommodation is in need of refurbishment. For example, ill-fitting blinds make viewing of projected images difficult. Too few digital projectors are available. Only one bank of laptops is available across the department, limiting access to information and learning technology in lessons. Only one room has water available for creative activities. Learning resources for practical childcare and health activities are good and reflect diversity.

### **What does Great Yarmouth College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve teaching and learning by supporting teachers to make greater use of strategies, including in the use of directed and demanding questions that increase the level of challenge to learners. Ensure that every learner has a clearly identified target grade to aim towards, particularly at advanced level.

- Strengthen the link between teachers and learning support assistants work by supporting them to work closely together in planning lessons. Ensure that lesson plans clearly identify learning support assistants' responsibilities so they can support individuals and groups to achieve their targets consistently.
- Improve the provision and use of information and learning technologies to enhance learning and develop learners' confidence and expertise, particularly in childcare. Provide regular access to interactive whiteboards for advanced level childcare learners.
- Review the state and appropriateness of teaching accommodation and prioritise refurbishment of the areas in most need. Undertake essential works, including the provision of blinds, as a matter of urgency.



## Construction

## Grade 3

### Context

37. Courses are offered both full and part time at entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced level in trowel occupations, wood occupations, painting and decorating, plumbing and electrical installations. Some 370 learners are studying on courses, the large majority of whom study full time. Almost all learners on full-time courses are male, of White British heritage and aged 16 to 18. Some 30 school pupils attend on a day-release basis.

### Key findings

- Success rates have increased on most courses over the last three years. In 2010/11, success rates on courses in basic construction skills and carpentry and joinery at foundation level and bench joinery at intermediate level and advanced level are high. However, success rates are well below average in painting and decorating, plumbing and electro-technical technology.
- Most current learners are on target to achieve and some are ahead of schedule in several practical subjects. In-year retention is markedly higher when compared to a similar point last year. Learners are motivated, attend and participate well. The tracking systems and assessment processes in place to monitor learners' progress are robust.
- Learners develop good skills, including in the use of hand tools, and gain good experience of basic craft construction techniques. Standards of learners' practical work are at least satisfactory and often better than expected. For example, some intermediate level brickwork learners are already practising on advanced level tasks such as building a chimney stack.
- Most lessons are good. In practical lessons, learners are motivated by setting their own targets, which are reviewed at the end by tutor and peers. Very effective questioning techniques are used regularly. Considerable recent improvement is evident in painting and decorating. For example, door graining techniques now include both oak and mahogany styles which had not been covered previously, despite syllabus requirements.
- In the best theory lessons, information and communication technology is used well, activities are varied to suit differing learning preferences and links are made between theory and related practical lessons. Questioning is inclusive and appropriate to learners' abilities.
- However, a minority of theory lessons are insufficiently challenging for more able learners. In one lesson, learners demonstrated their understanding of different brick bonds using wooden blocks. More able learners completed the task some minutes before others and spent this time talking and distracting less able learners.
- The range of programmes is satisfactory. The recently introduced entry level short course promotes very good progression to foundation level. School links

provide a progression route to mainstream programmes. Revised entry requirements and rigorous recruitment processes have placed learners on more appropriate courses, particularly in plumbing. Additional qualifications offered at foundation level improve learning and thinking skills and at intermediate level improve employability.

- Full-time learners' opportunities to gain work experience are too few. Managers are developing stronger links; for example, manufacturers hold exhibitions of tools and equipment in the college and specialist trades, such as thatching, give demonstrations. The department hosts Skill-Build competitions. A recently appointed work placement officer liaises with local industry but few placements have been found to date.
- The provision of additional learning support is good with a high number of learners currently supported. Many classes include an actively involved learning support assistant, usually helping several learners who benefit and progress well. However, planning for in-class support is informal and records of support provided and its impact are underdeveloped.
- A high level of attention is paid to health and safety in practical lessons including good use of risk assessments to raise learners' awareness. Learners' understanding of the importance of health and safety in the workshops is reinforced successfully by using learners as workshop supervisors on a daily basis with responsibility for checking the safety of both users and visitors.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of equality and diversity issues and how to promote them because of recent training. Tutorials cover equality and diversity topics, such as bullying, homophobia and disability awareness well. Additional qualifications in sustainable development encompass related topics such as building techniques used globally, loss of natural resources and the effects on the building industry.
- Engagement with employers and the construction industry is limited, although activity to promote this is underway. As a result, teachers have reduced opportunities to update their vocational skills in support of the drive to raise standards. Staff work closely with parents and/or carers to support learners to achieve. Learners' views are gathered and used productively.
- The self-assessment report is self-critical and mostly accurate. Progress in tackling and resolving many of the areas for improvement identified is significant, albeit in some cases relatively recent. Learners' retention rates are much improved. However, some actions are not yet complete. For example, monitoring of the quality of some documentation, such as lesson plans, is insufficiently effective in reducing inconsistencies across the department.

### **What does Great Yarmouth College need to do to improve further?**

- Monitor the attendance, retention and progress of learners on courses in painting and decorating, plumbing and electro-technical technology closely to ensure that learners meet their targets.

- Support teachers to use teaching strategies that stretch and challenge more able learners during theory sessions in order to use lesson time fully productively and ensure learners achieve their full potential.
- Use the emerging partnerships with employers and the community constructively to identify learning opportunities for visits, work placements in work or on projects, and apprenticeships.
- Identify opportunities for strong links with industry, manufacturers or other outside organisations to allow for updating of the vocational skills of teaching staff.
- Ensure the implementation of quality assurance arrangements to improve consistency across the department in the planning of lessons and the recording of all support activities in order to be able to evaluate their impact on learning.

## Information and communication technology

## Grade 3

### Context

38. Courses are offered from foundation to advanced level for practitioners and users. Of the 127 learners, the large majority are aged 16 to 18. About a third of learners, mostly adults, study part time. Over three-quarters of learners are men. A very small minority of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Most provision is offered during the day time with a few courses offered in the evenings.

### Key findings

- Success rates on almost all courses have increased over the last three years. Success rates on intermediate and advanced level courses are average but rates are low on the foundation level course. Different groups of learners have no significant differences between their success rates.
- Current learners are making satisfactory progress; they enjoy their learning and their attendance is good. Most learners are developing appropriate computer skills which will aid employability. Inspectors observed relatively inexperienced learners using business application software confidently including demonstrating their understanding of certain features such as ensuring security for personal records.
- Learners feel safe and know how to use the internet safely. They are well aware of what to do if they experience cyber-bullying. Wall displays and computer screens reinforce internet safety well. Learners are mostly aware of and use safe working practices; however, in a minority of lessons learners drink water at computers without being challenged about safety by teachers.
- Most lessons are at least satisfactory. In better lessons, the use of information and learning technology is imaginative and targeted and probing questions are highly effective. Most lesson plans include opportunities for learners to be actively involved in learning but this does not happen consistently in practice. Teachers do not always assess and build on learners' prior knowledge effectively during lessons.
- Teachers and learners use the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) frequently to aid learning; for example, learners use the wide range of uploaded learning resources for revision or to extend their studies. Ease of access to targets that are held within the VLE by both teachers and learners increases the extent to which these are used constructively to promote achievement.
- Teachers and learners consistently set and regularly monitor targets within electronically held personal learning plans. The majority of targets are specific and time bound; however, in a minority of cases, the targets are insufficiently focussed or specific. The monitoring of learners' progress on advanced level

courses is particularly regular and effective. Insufficient attention has been paid to monitoring foundation level learners' progress.

- The range of courses is satisfactory with progression routes available from foundation to advanced level and to higher education. The curriculum does not yet respond fully to the wider needs of local employers and in providing better opportunities for subject-related work experience. However, arrangements are in place to strengthen recent collaborative work and develop more.
- Learners receive good care, guidance and support. Learners comment on teachers' helpfulness and the extent of their support. Personal tutors are effective in supporting learners to stay on their courses. The provision of additional learning support is highly effective in helping current learners' progress, particularly in helping them achieve high grades.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have comprehensive systems in place to ensure close monitoring of learners' progress. Sometimes, managers do not use these systems swiftly or rigorously enough to help identify issues early and deal with them promptly, for example in raising success rates on foundation level courses.
- The monitoring of new teachers' performance is insufficiently prioritised and not rigorous enough. Learners' views are not used fully effectively to inform management actions. All staff have good opportunities for staff development, but the opportunities for industrial or subject knowledge updating are limited. Managers recognise the need to increase partnerships with employers to resolve this problem.
- The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, although a very few strengths are overstated. The report is appropriately self-critical and evaluative, and involved all staff. The very good practice shown by a few teachers has not been effectively shared with across the teaching team. Safeguarding arrangements are good.

### **What does Great Yarmouth College need to do to improve further?**

- Raise success rates on the foundation level course by increasing the rigour of monitoring of learners' performance by managers and course leaders.
- Increase the range of teachers' strategies to ensure that learners are actively engaged in lessons. Support teachers to check and reinforce learning frequently by questioning and setting short assessment tasks. Disseminate good practice in teaching, learning and assessment more systematically across the department.
- Make better use of learners' views about the quality of provision to inform improvement actions.
- Implement arrangements to monitor new teachers' performance rigorously to ensure prompt support when needed to secure rapid improvements in teaching and learning.

- Develop links with employers to provide opportunities for work experience and industrial updating for staff.

## Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

## Grade 3

### Context

39. Courses are offered in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) from entry to intermediate level. The majority of the 261 learners on these courses are adults and study part time, with one group of ESOL learners aged 16 to 18 studying on a full-time course. Functional skills courses are provided for full-time learners aged 16 to 18 alongside their main course of study, with around 1,500 enrolments on these courses.

### Key findings

- Success rates for learners on ESOL courses are high, except for speaking and listening short courses at entry level, where rates are low. Success rates for adult literacy and numeracy courses are low on long courses but average on short courses. Success rates for functional skills vary by level and subject but are in line with the low national average on the majority of courses.
- Current learners are developing a good range of skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Most learners are making at least satisfactory and often good progress. On ESOL courses, learners develop their language skills well, which enhances their employability.
- Attendance at lessons overall is low across the provision. Although teachers monitor course level attendance, this does not always result in increased attendance. Managers do not analyse attendance data by subject, level and department sufficiently, in order to have a detailed overview of attendance patterns and to secure targeted improvements.
- Teachers and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers make particularly good use of a wide range of varied activities that motivate and engage learners enabling them to make good progress. Teachers and learners make some good use of information and communication technology, but access to this technology is not always available in classrooms.
- Teachers do not always ensure that more able learners in mixed level groups have their needs met sufficiently, particularly those learners working towards intermediate level qualifications. Too often learners work at the same pace and level with insufficiently demanding work set for learners aiming for qualifications at a higher level.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory. In the current year, significantly improved arrangements for initial and diagnostic assessment of learners' prior attainment in functional skills are in place and used effectively. Helpful and detailed feedback on assessed work is provided for the majority of learners and clearly identifies what they need to do to improve further.
- The use of target setting and personal learning plans are satisfactory, although learners' experience of these procedures varies considerably from course to course. The best practice, which is becoming more widespread but not yet

consistent, includes learners setting and reviewing their own clear and measureable targets regularly. Managers are developing a tracking system to monitor learners' progress more systematically, but this is not yet in place.

- Functional skills classes are well organised and carefully timetabled, with small class sizes. These arrangements support learner's individual progress well, as they benefit from frequent and effective one-to-one support from teachers in lessons. The provision of extra help from learning support assistants varies from highly effective to broadly satisfactory.
- The range of provision for literacy and numeracy is underdeveloped. All provision is college-based although an ESOL community class is planned to start shortly. Further curriculum development work is currently underway in partnership with a good range of community-based organisations.
- Recent management actions to secure improvements are proving very effective. Significant improvements in arrangements for initial assessment across the college, a strong and effective drive to secure improvements in teaching and learning, the sharing of good practice, the development of learning resources and much staff development have secured improvements for learners.
- The quality assurance of some aspects of learning, such as assessment practice, the quality of target setting and personal learning plans and the effectiveness of the work of learning support assistants are not yet given sufficient priority or rigorous enough to reduce inconsistencies in learners' experiences. The analysis and use of data to secure improvements is underdeveloped.

### **What does Great Yarmouth College need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that managers analyse attendance data by subject, level and department as a matter of urgency in order to develop and implement effective strategies to increase learners' attendance at lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of lesson planning and delivery to ensure that the needs of more able learners are met. Match tasks and activities more closely to learners' ability level and course requirements in mixed level lessons.
- Develop the adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision to include fully implementing plans to provide more classes for learners both at the college and in the community, in order to provide a greater range of opportunities for learners.
- Increase the rigour of quality assurance of the provision at operational level, to include more effective analysis and use of data, in order to provide greater consistency in the quality of provision for learners.



## Information about the inspection

40. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the college's quality adviser, as nominee, carried out the reinspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
41. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at the questionnaires that learners and employers had recently completed for the college. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from courses across the subject areas the college offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Great Yarmouth College**  
**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>				
Full-time learners	1,360	1,131	229	0
Part-time learners	786	232	554	398
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	3			
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3			
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3			
How well do learners progress?	3			
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3			
How safe do learners feel?	3			
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3			
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	3			
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>n/a</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3			
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3			
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3			
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3			
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>n/a</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3			
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3			
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3			
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3			
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3			
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3			

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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