Further Education and Skills inspection report

Date published: 25 October 2013 Inspection Number: 423386

URN: 130767



## **East Norfolk Sixth Form College**

## Sixth form college

Inspection dates		17-20 September 2013			
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2			
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good-2			
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3			
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-			
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2			

#### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- Student attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good.
- Most students develop good skills for further study, employment and progression.
- Most lessons are good with passionate and enthusiastic teachers planning a range of interesting and challenging activities that stimulate learning well.
- Accommodation and resources to support learning are very good. Teachers create an inclusive and positive learning environment which allows very diverse groups of students to learn effectively with mutual respect.
- Good early identification of students with additional support needs, with appropriate support promptly put in place.
- Governors and senior managers have a clear strategic focus that is well matched to the priorities
  of the locality and region.
- The curriculum is responsive and flexible, includes very strong partnership work, and meets students' needs and their ability range well.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Too many students do not successfully complete their programme at AS level.
- Observations of teaching do not sufficiently identify the improvements needed in the less effective lessons, which has slowed progress in raising the standard of underperforming courses.
- Not enough lessons are outstanding and even in the majority of good lessons, activities do not always fully stretch and challenge all students.
- A minority of students receive feedback which lacks sufficient detail to inform them how to improve and to achieve high grades.

#### **Full report**

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

- Ensure that the revised observation process accurately identifies areas for development by better management of staff performance and development.
- Share best practice internally and externally in planning lessons to ensure that all students are stretched and challenged to achieve their full potential, and consider piloting research and supported experiments to identify good practice in this area.
- Improve monitoring and moderation of the quality of feedback on marked work to ensure all students receive feedback which enables them to improve and to achieve high grades.

#### **Inspection judgements**

#### **Outcomes for learners**

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the proportion of students successfully achieving their qualifications declined steadily until 2011/12. In the last year, managers have taken effective steps to ensure that students are on the right courses. While it is too early to assess the impact of these changes fully, college data for 2012/13 indicates an increase in success rates to slightly below the average for all colleges.
- Five of the twelve subject areas, which the college offers, perform below the sector average. However, in other subjects, such as mathematics, public services, and sports students achieve well above the average.
- The vast majority of students are aged 16 to 18 and are on advanced level programmes, mainly studying GCE AS and A levels. Students on these programmes have lower entry qualifications than those in other colleges. Nevertheless, nearly half of all students make better progress than expected on AS and A level courses and the majority of students perform broadly in line with expectations given their starting points.
- In 2012/13 three quarters of students undertaking AS levels successfully completed their qualification, an increase on previous years. Those who complete a full A-level programme are usually successful. However, students' achievement of high grades in both AS and A levels have declined steadily over the last four years. The few students undertaking vocational qualifications at advanced level succeed broadly in line with national averages and have high grades that are above the average.
- The proportion of students successfully completing GCSE programmes increased in the last year and is in line with national averages. However, students' achievement of high grades has declined over the last four years and is below the average. In 2012/13, the proportion of students successfully completing other intermediate programmes has grown substantially.
- During inspection student attendance and punctuality has been good. Students progress well within the college and when they complete their studies, the majority enter higher education, employment or other forms of training such as apprenticeships.
- Students develop good personal, social and employability skills. The standard of students' work is mostly good. Students develop good technical skills in visual arts. English language students show high levels of motivation and pay careful attention to the presentation of their work. Science students develop good practical skills and have high standards of information technology skills. Most students develop good language and mathematical skills in class to help prepare them for future work and study.

Teachers develop students' employability skills well. The college offers an increasing range of opportunities for students to engage in volunteering and to have placements with leading local and international businesses. Students also develop good independent thinking and research skills, and they demonstrate good levels of confidence in their abilities.

#### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Students benefit from the mostly good teaching, learning and assessment. While students' outcomes require improvement, initial advice and guidance have improved significantly to ensure that students are on courses that are likely to lead to successful achievement and progression.
- Staff take particular care to identify students who have additional learning needs early, and to help them settle into the college with appropriate support arranged from the start. Well qualified support staff work with teachers to provide good quality support in class and in extra sessions outside lessons. The initial assessment of all students is prompt, so that when courses begin, teachers have a wide range of information available, enabling them to plan lessons to meet the needs of individual students.
- Staff encourage students to consider carefully whether they have made the right subject choices in the first few weeks of the course, and where necessary to "swap not drop". In mathematics, students have longer to evaluate their options and some sample two courses for up to five weeks before deciding which to continue and which to stop.
- In the majority of lessons which are good, passionate teachers with infectious enthusiasm plan a range of interesting and challenging activities that stimulate learning and ensure that all students achieve the lesson objectives and make good progress.
- Feedback to students is positive and encouraging, building confidence and self-esteem. These skilled and well qualified teachers have high expectations of their students and develop strong working relationships with them. They encourage and motivate them, and develop their knowledge and skills effectively in fast moving lessons, which make very productive use of time. Students develop relevant specialist vocabulary well. They become confident independent learners who routinely undertake work out of class.
- Teachers also expect students to support and assess their peers. However, even in the good lessons activities often do not fully stretch and challenge all students. Teachers use questioning effectively to regularly check understanding, but they do not always use this effectively to develop the full potential of students. In the majority of subject areas students benefit from a rich programme of motivating and stimulating extra activities such as residentials, trips, competitions and visiting speakers.
- The minority of less effective lessons lack pace and questioning is too general, so teachers fail to check adequately the understanding of all the students and to draw all into the lesson. Activities in these lessons are not effectively planned to meet the needs of individual students or to develop mathematics and English skills. Teachers miss opportunities to develop specialist vocabulary. As a result, students do not make sufficient progress. In these less effective lessons, teachers often talk for too long and students lose concentration.
- Observations of teaching do not always identify these less effective lessons, and this has slowed progress in improving underperforming courses. Managers recognise this and they have introduced a revised process to ensure that they identify and act upon areas for development.
- Accommodation and resources to support learning are very good. For the majority of courses, teachers produce high quality resources, which effectively support teaching and learning. However, the use of use of information learning technology (ILT) and the virtual learning environment (VLE) varies considerably between subject areas.

- Teachers monitor students' progress thoroughly and resources to support students are at a high level. For example, students meet their tutors weekly and through their tutorials receive effective support to plan their progress to university and employment. Senior tutors promptly intervene to support students at risk of not completing and those with attendance or personal issues. Tutors regularly review students' progress against minimum target grades at several points in the year and report progress to parents.
- Assessment arrangements are good overall. Most students are assessed frequently and from the feedback they receive are aware of the level at which they are working. However, a minority receive feedback which lacks sufficient detail to inform them how to improve and to achieve high grades. Teachers clearly explain the assessment and examination requirements of each course, and prepare students well for these. The standard of students' work on most courses is high.
- Teachers create an inclusive and positive environment to learn in which sometimes very diverse groups of students learn effectively with mutual respect. Staff effectively challenge the use of stereotypes in most subject areas. Students can volunteer to support other students by training for the roles of "Wellbeing Agents". Following training, they can promote strategies to improve health and wellbeing to their peers.

Science	
16-19 study programmes	Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good. This contributes to good outcomes, in particular at GCE A level where students make better progress than predicted from their prior achievements and in the proportion of high grades, which is above the national average in most science subjects, as it is for GCSE science.
- Teachers set high standards. They share their enthusiasm for their subjects with students, which helps inspire and motivate them. Students are diligent and hard working. Punctuality and attendance are good. Relationships are harmonious; teachers establish a purposeful working environment and make good use of humour.
- Teachers plan lessons well. They use a variety of activities that successfully engage students and promote their learning. A good mix of practical work and theoretical study maintains students' interest. On a few occasions, teachers do not provide sufficient stretch and challenge for the more able; at times, the pace is too slow and set by the students. Teachers and students work carefully with due regard to health and safety. In the second week of their course, students in an AS-level chemistry lesson were developing good skills in handling apparatus and chemicals as well as learning to take accurate measurements through completing an acid-base titration.
- Teachers check students' learning and progress thoroughly during lessons by the effective use of questions and reviewing students' progress in completing written or practical work. They consolidate learning and extend and deepen students' understanding well through discussion and dialogue. Students work productively in pairs and groups and respond well to the opportunity to explore their understanding through discussion with their peers. Students make good progress in their learning. Their work is well presented and its standard is high.
- Teachers make good use of technology. For example, showing a brief video clip from the internet to explore nutrition in GCSE science and using a data-logger in AS physics to stimulate discussion about motion. Students have good skills in using information technology. Staff and students use the college's VLE as a matter of routine, developing students' independent learning skills.

- Teachers effectively base initial targets on students' achievements at GCSE and AS level. Students complete tasks during induction to assess their subject knowledge, practical and mathematical skills. Teachers use this information well in their planning alongside information on special requirements or needs for support students may have.
- Assessment is good. Helpful written comments and useful verbal feedback help students improve their work. Teachers monitor and review students' progress in assessments and in meeting their target grades using their individual learning plans. Teachers encourage students to assess their own progress. Teachers identify students who need support to achieve their target grades and put measures in place to help. Students value the help teachers readily give them outside lesson times.
- Teachers support students well to develop the mathematical skills required for their science courses. They ensure that students are familiar with specialist vocabulary such as "kinematics" and "organelle" and encourage them to use glossaries of specialist terms.
- Teachers supplement well the thorough and comprehensive information, advice and guidance procedures through talks by visiting speakers, including previous students, visits and work placements. Attractive posters and displays in classrooms, laboratories and corridors inform students of opportunities they may wish to consider. Progress to higher education and employment is good.
- Staff effectively foster and promote equality and diversity through the development of mutual respect; students' behaviour is good. Displays in the classrooms and laboratories challenge stereotypes. The recruitment of female students to physics courses at advanced level is higher than the national figure. Teachers periodically review course materials to ensure they do not promote discrimination or reinforce stereotypes. They are alert to opportunities to promote equality and diversity in the classroom, and are sensitive to cultural and religious differences.

#### **ICT for practitioners**

#### 16-19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning requires improvement and this is reflected in the low proportion of students who successfully complete their programme. Most lessons proceed at a reasonable pace and students mostly make satisfactory progress in the classroom.
- The less effective lessons have too much teacher activity, often starting with the teacher talking followed by question and answer. Teachers do not always use questioning effectively and the checking of learning is insufficient. In these lessons, teachers do not always plan effectively to meet the needs of individual students and activities are not always sufficiently challenging for the more able.
- In the better lessons, teachers plan work carefully. They include an appropriate amount of activity with sufficient challenge and all the students learn well. Support for students by teachers in lessons is good and where students need help to meet specific needs they receive appropriate help.
- Assessment of coursework is satisfactory and teachers return marked work promptly. However, feedback on A-level courses lacks sufficient detail to enable students to improve. On vocational courses, students receive guidance that is more detailed. On A-level programmes, too few students resubmit work to improve their grades and the achievement of high grades is low.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not consistently incorporate the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills into their vocational teaching and miss opportunities to develop higher-level skills. However, in the better lessons, teachers use specialist terminology to extend students' literacy skills.

- The development of personal social and employability skills is satisfactory. Students enjoy their work and develop good attitudes to learning. However, in many sessions students have insufficient opportunities to develop broader skills for work and team working skills. Students have few opportunities to gain work experience, but where staff have had recent experience of work they use this well to provide students with realistic case studies. For instance, one member of staff runs an e-commerce business alongside their teaching and uses examples from this work to improve the learning.
- The initial assessment of students is thorough, but the results do not always influence teachers' planning of sessions to meet individual student needs. Students receive appropriate careers advice and guidance that enables them to make informed choices at the beginning of their course. Careers advice and support during tutorials is effective in enabling students to progress.
- Teachers do not routinely reinforce equality and diversity in lessons. Lessons do not enable students to sufficiently explore and develop these areas within the context of their course. The promotion of equality and diversity is included in a minority of lesson plans. However, teachers occasionally miss opportunities to develop students' knowledge and understanding of diversity.

# Visual Arts 16-19 study programmes Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which contributes to the high level of skills students develop and rapid the progress they make in lessons. Most students are successful in gaining high grades. Almost all the rates for high grade were above average in 2012/13. Six of the qualifications have success rates above the national average. GCSE success rates are at or above the national average.
- Students have high aspirations. Most of them progress into higher education or gain employment. Good progression is made by students who work over three years from GCSE to A level, one gaining an A\* is now at university. Students gain high marks and produce work of exceptional quality work.
- Teachers challenge students who produce work of a high standard to meet higher targets.

  Teachers explain tasks clearly and align them to the requirements of students' qualifications.
- The pace of learning is demanding and teachers constantly remind students of deadlines. Students' develop their drawing skills in fine art quickly by producing a series of timed drawings which show significant improvement over a short period. Students in photography and 3D design refine their work through the confident use of computer techniques.
- Teachers provide extremely effective coaching and support. Students receive specific guidance to work independently and research outside the classroom. Enrichment activities include sketching and photographing in Amsterdam. A beautifully finished and interesting book of the visit includes students' pictures and shots.
- Teachers give sensitive and effective support for students with barriers to achievement. For example, immediately after a teacher clearly demonstrated a technology process, the support tutor broke the activity down into small sequential steps which the students quickly used to produce a complex image. Teachers keep detailed notes on students and adapt their behaviour and language to support students' progress.
- Teachers use their wide range of knowledge well. They introduce students to the language of their subject. Students increase their vocabulary during discussion about artwork. Most lessons include constructive critique. Graphic design students match descriptive words to different artists' styles. As students become confident, they extend their vocabulary.

- Teachers use technology extremely well in the classroom. For instance, they demonstrate how to simplify an image by blurring or reducing pixels and use sketching software to develop students' understanding of geometry. Students have adequate opportunity to use computers to create work and carry out research. A specific study area is equipped for art students with basic resources which they use effectively. However, a few teaching rooms are too cramped for teachers to move around freely to critique students' work effectively.
- Teachers keep comprehensive information about each student to inform individual learning plans and records. These include personal barriers to learning goals. Teaching methods are adapted effectively to meet each student's needs. However, it is unclear how effective teachers are in providing support for examination techniques.
- Students come from a wide range of backgrounds. Teachers and students are polite and treat each other with respect. In a minority of lessons more experienced students assist the less experienced. Teachers and students share their enthusiasm, expertise and particular interests with each other during sessions.

English	
16-19 study programmes	Good

- Teaching and learning are good, as are students' success and progress on most courses. Students at all levels improve their ability to speak and write accurately, logically, imaginatively, perceptively and convincingly, and their teachers encourage them to be ambitious. Students acquire the language they need to discuss their work articulately, and in addition to good communication and research skills, all courses develop independence and teamwork.
- Teachers and their students have a very high regard for one another. They are passionate about learning, and see it as an enjoyable, shared, lifelong experience. Students work hard, are proud of what they achieve and most progress to further study.
- The staff form a good, specialist team and continually seek to improve provision through a range of initiatives. Their expert guidance allows students to select individual, fascinating and challenging topics for personal investigation. For example, one A2 English language student investigated the language development of young family members while another compared the language male and female doctors use to patients on television.
- Teachers plan lively and practical lessons which interest and motivate while helping students to understand examination requirements. Literature students enjoy writing creatively in the style of the authors they are studying while developing their critical and analytical skills. GCSE students learn to edit their own assignments by evaluating one another's work against the assessment objectives.
- Suggestions for wider reading and exciting enrichment opportunities including theatre trips, a seminar programme and a prestigious essay competition provide excellent challenge outside the classroom. However, the level of challenge inside the classroom is not always high enough. A minority of students do not receive sufficient challenge to expand their answers further and are not encouraged to take a more active role in theirs and others' learning.
- Accommodation and resources are excellent. Rooms are attractive and well-equipped with computers to support study. Teachers develop high quality teaching and learning materials, and students make good use at home of the resources posted on the college website, with further on-line support from their teachers, for example through postings on their coursework blog.
- Students have regular, useful progress reviews with their teachers; work is assessed and progress checked against their minimum target grades. New procedures have just been put in place to monitor more carefully those at risk of dropping out, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

- Support for students is good. Teaching assistants provide effective additional help where needed. Teachers also willingly put in extra time and, while planning meticulously, are responsive and not afraid to digress where needed. For example, students particularly valued the 'crash course' in English grammar they had requested.
- Assessment is good. Course planning incorporates examination assignments, homework and regular checking activities such as quizzes and games. Teachers set homework regularly and return it promptly, annotated with detailed constructive comments. Several of the team are also examiners, and all ensure that students know exactly what is required.
- Students and teachers work together in an egalitarian atmosphere, sharing a common goal and passion. Students have learned to spot and to challenge stereotyping, and they explore and celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity through the study of both language and literature.

#### The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. The Principal, appointed 18 months before the inspection, has worked hard to steer the college towards being inclusive and concentrating on the needs of local community and to reverse a decline in success rates since the last inspection. Together with senior managers, the Principal has an ambitious vision to improve further the quality of provision to outstanding. The clear mission and strategic priorities focus strongly on the college's contribution towards the economic regeneration of the area it serves and on improving the range and level of vocational skills which its students achieve.
- An enthusiastic and passionate governing body knows the college well and has extensive links with the local community that it uses to promote the college and to inform it of local needs. Governors have a broad and appropriate range of skills. They worked closely with managers to form the strategic plan for 2013 to 2016, and they are monitoring its implementation carefully. Senior managers provide regular detailed and accurate data on the progress of the college. Governors hold senior managers to account for continuing developments and improvements. They carry out their statutory responsibilities thoroughly.
- Managers tackle underperformance effectively and staff make good use of the development opportunities. Managers recognise and reward high performance and tackle marginal performance or long-term absence, through the implementation of clear policies and procedures. These have resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Managers monitor the performance of staff well through an effective appraisal scheme.
- Outcomes from lesson observations link closely to annual reviews of performance. Managers and teachers have individual performance targets linked to the college's strategic objectives and staff are motivated to achieve these targets. Poorly performing staff promptly receive help with their professional development or leave.
- New teachers receive good quality tailored support to help them become skilled professionals. Managers maintain a detailed analysis of strengths and required improvements that leads to staff training designed carefully to meet identified needs.
- Senior managers have considerably improved the college's quality improvement measures, particularly the observations of teaching and learning. Managers and staff regularly seek the views of students and parents through questionnaires, forums and an annual students' conference. Managers analyse the outcomes of these carefully and take prompt action to resolve concerns.
- Curriculum self-assessment reports are detailed and they use a wide range of evidence to support judgements about the quality of provision. Improvement actions are clear and managers monitor these regularly. Self-assessment is inclusive of the views of teachers and well supported by detailed analyses of performance data and lesson observation grades. The selfassessment report is accurate, and judgements match those of inspectors.

- Planning and management of the curriculum is good. The college has good links with employers and partnerships, which it uses to underpin its commitment to local regeneration and enables students to acquire good employment skills. These partnerships have helped a number of students to secure valuable work placements and volunteering opportunities. Managers and staff use partnerships creatively to match the curriculum to the needs of employers and to provide students with appropriate progression routes into employment, further training and higher education.
- The curriculum is responsive to students' needs. Following a period of poor performance in several subjects such as advanced level philosophy, accounting and computing, the college now offers a range of alternative subjects that suit the needs of students.
- Managers and most staff promote equality, diversity and inclusion well. The college responds effectively to issues and concerns raised by the active student equality forum, which meets regularly to discuss equality of opportunity. The relatively high proportion of students with additional learning needs achieve to the same extent as other students. The college has successfully narrowed the small differences in achievement between males and females. The few students with complex and multiple needs receive good quality support and they achieve well. Managers monitor gaps in achievements well and take appropriate actions to deal with them.
- Tutorials promote equality and diversity through sessions celebrating diversity, Black History Month, International Women's Day and the raising awareness of mental health, sexual orientation and bullying. The extent to which teachers integrate diversity topics with the taught curriculum is variable. Teachers occasionally fail to promote equalities issues even when opportunities to do so are clear.
- The college meets its statutory requirements in safeguarding students, and managers and staff take appropriate measures to manage risk.

## **Record of Main Findings (RMF)**

## **East Norfolk Sixth Form College**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:		
1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-19 study programmes
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	3	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	
Science	2
ICT for practitioners	3
Visual Arts	2
English	2

## **Provider details**

Type of provider	Sixth form college		
Age range of learners	16+		
Approximate number of all learners over the previous	Full-time: 1,763		
full contract year	Part-time: 9		
Principal/CEO	Daphne King		
Date of previous inspection	30 April 2010		
Website address	www.enorf.ac.uk		

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above			
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-1	18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
Full-time	2	N/A	161	1	N/A	1587	17	N/A	N/A	
Part-time	0	N/A	0		N/A	2	0	N/A	N/A	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total					
Number of apprentices by	Inte	rmedia	te		Adva	nced		Higher		
Apprenticeship level and age	16-18	1	19+		16-18	19+	16-	5-18 19		
	N/A	N	N/A		N/A	N/A	N,	N/A		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A									
Full-time	N/A									
Part-time	N/A									
Number of community learners	N/A									
Number of employability learners	N/A									
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency									
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:		•	N/A							

#### **Contextual information**

East Norfolk Sixth Form College is a medium sized college located in Gorleston, Norfolk. Many of the nearby areas it serves have pockets of high deprivation.

Unemployment in the area is slightly higher than the national average. The percentage of full-time students enrolled at the college from a minority ethnic heritage is above that of the local population. In 2012, the proportion of school leavers with five or more high grade GCSEs including English and mathematics in Norfolk was below the national average for England.

Advanced level learners' prior attainment on entry to the college is much lower than typical in similar colleges.

#### Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector** 

William Baidoe-Ansah HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the deputy principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012

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