

Suffolk New College

General further education college

Inspection dates		19–23 May 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This college requires improvement because:

- The proportion of students achieving their main qualification in 2012/13 remained below the national rate for similar colleges.
- Vocational students on courses at level 3 make insufficient progress relative to their starting points.
- The proportion of students achieving functional skills in English and mathematics is low.
- Teachers do not challenge students and apprentices sufficiently well to make rapid progress.
- Teachers provide insufficient opportunities for students to develop their English and mathematics.
- Teachers' written assessments on students' work are of inconsistent quality.
- Leaders and managers have made insufficient progress in raising the performance of the most underperforming subject areas.
- When judging the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, managers place too much emphasis on lesson observation grades alone.
- Managers have not ensured that all students are receiving their full entitlement under the provision of the study programme.

This college has the following strengths:

- Students' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning.
- Students benefit from a broad range of imaginative classroom-based activities that help to build their understanding and knowledge of the workplace and to develop good practical skills.
- Students benefit from up-to-date resources and accommodation that contributes well to learning.
- Teachers and learning support assistants plan well the support for students with additional needs.
- Teachers track students' progress well in their vocational courses.
- Managers match the range of courses particularly effectively to the skills priorities of the local economy and to the needs of the community.
- The views of students are particularly valued and students play a strong role in college developments.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Teachers should plan their lessons more carefully so that they challenge all students to make rapid progress.
- Teachers need to provide more individualised support to ensure that students are able to succeed in their functional skills examinations.
- Teachers must ensure that the quality of the written feedback that they give to students matches the quality of their more effective verbal feedback.
- Senior managers should ensure they urgently implement action plans to bring about improvements in under-performing subject areas.
- Managers should improve the rigour of self-assessment by giving equal prominence to evidence from aspects of teaching, learning and assessment other than the outcomes of observations of lessons.
- Managers must ensure that students on the study programme receive their full entitlement to mathematics provision and they extend the opportunities for external work placements for these students.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- The proportion of students achieving their main qualifications requires improvement. It rose sharply from a low point two years ago, but then remained static last year at a little below the national rate for similar colleges. Too many students do not successfully complete functional skills in English and mathematics. The very small number of students studying on long courses that the college has subcontracted to other providers do not achieve well. College data indicate that the proportion of students completing their courses this year will be broadly in line with last year, but that a larger proportion of these students will achieve.
- In the majority of subject areas, students' achievement rates require improvement. However, they achieve well in health and social care and media, but their achievements in business are inadequate. The small number of apprentices achieve their qualifications in line with the national rate, but a majority of them are not completing within the allotted timescale.
- Students on A-level and AS-level courses make expected progress in relation to their prior attainment, although a high proportion of AS-level students do not complete their course. The larger proportion of students on vocational courses at level 3 do not make sufficient progress. The majority of students taking GCSE English achieve a high grade, but the corresponding figure for GCSE mathematics is only in line with the low national rate.
- Students attend well and arrive to lessons or the workplace on time. Within their vocational lessons, they develop good practical skills and most produce work that meets the requirements of the course. However, a minority of students do not gain the wider understanding or expertise that would improve further their opportunities to progress or allow them to broaden their interest. Teachers and managers are increasing the number of events that students participate in to improve their wider skills, such as Young Enterprise activities and a health and well-being event.
- Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive well-targeted support that ensures that they make good progress and achieve well. The number of students from ethnic groups

other than White British is small, but significant differences exist in the achievement rates of these groups of students which have been evident over a number of years.

- Students benefit from additional short qualifications that they study alongside their main programme that aim specifically at improving their employability. They are gaining from the increasing opportunities to understand more about the requirements of the workplace in their vocational areas through a broad range of classroom-based activities, external speakers and visits. For example in media, students filming for a quiz show demonstrated confidence both in front of the camera and with the technical aspects of filming. However, insufficient links with local employers result in a low proportion of students benefitting from meaningful work experience.
- Students do not gain English and mathematics qualifications rapidly enough. A significant number of students do not receive their entitlement to continued teaching enabling them to progress towards achieving a GCSE high-grade pass in mathematics. Too many students take functional skills examinations at the same level repeatedly without receiving the targeted support that they require to improve and too few students who would benefit from the opportunity to progress immediately to a GCSE course in English and/or mathematics do so.
- Students benefit from a broad range of vocational courses that match well the requirements of the local area and the large majority of students progress on to higher levels of study or training or directly into employment. Personal tutors and careers' advisers support students on courses at level 3 well in applying to higher education and nearly all that apply successfully secure a place. Managers have been very effective in collecting the destinations of the vast majority of students when they complete their courses or training and staff are using this information well to inform future curriculum developments.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved over the last two years but a significant minority of teaching still requires improvement, including at subcontracted provision. The positive impact of teaching, learning and assessment on success rates is not yet enough and the rates remain below the levels of similar colleges. They are particularly low for English and mathematics functional skills.
- Students are polite and attentive. They apply themselves diligently and work hard. Teachers create a positive learning environment that students respect and appreciate. Students benefit from the well-resourced independent learning centre, alongside a wide range of other high-standard resources including modern and well-equipped practical working environments. These are particularly good in construction, hospitality and catering, and hairdressing and beauty therapy. However, other areas lack resources. For example, the number of assessors is insufficient to ensure apprentices' assessments and reviews take place without delays. In motor vehicle, cars are insufficiently up-to-date for students to improve their skills.
- Teachers plan work carefully to meet the requirements of the qualification. However, they do not challenge students sufficiently well to work beyond the requirements of the syllabus. Students do not have enough opportunities to develop new and sought after skills, and in several vocational areas, including sport and early years, a minority of the work set is unimaginative and low-level with little opportunity for the more able to undertake additional activities to extend their learning.
- Teachers' assessment of students' progress within lessons is good. They use a broad range of activities to evaluate what students can and cannot do. For example, teachers skilfully question students to test their understanding and to broaden their knowledge. The majority of teachers use quizzes, short tests and well-managed group work very well to gauge students' progress. Teachers provide good and timely verbal feedback to students that motivates them, affirms their achievements and increases their confidence.

- The written feedback that teachers give to students requires improvement. Feedback is insufficiently detailed or targeted to allow the individual student to understand what they need to do to improve. For example, in English and mathematics, feedback is not specific enough which has led to repeated failures in tests. In business, teachers advise students on how to pass the assignment, but do not challenge them to try for higher grades. In a very small number of cases, teachers do not provide written feedback. A minority of teachers set long-term targets for students that are insufficiently targeted at the particular development needs of individual students.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in both English and mathematics functional skills require improvement. Students on a minority of courses at level 2 do not have the opportunity to gain mathematics qualifications, for example in music, media and art and design. Vocational teachers have received training to develop English and mathematics through their teaching and a few are doing this confidently. For example, hairdressing students use protractors to confirm the angles of their cuts and calculate ratios for mixing colours. However, the majority of teachers do not include English and mathematics sufficiently well in vocational lessons. Not all teachers routinely correct students' spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Teachers and learning support assistants work collaboratively to support students with additional learning needs. They plan in advance of the lesson to make sure the learning assistants can provide the most effective learning support to individuals or to a group of students. Advisers in the 'Learning Curve', the college's dedicated support area, provide very useful extra support to students outside of the classroom.
- Students receive good quality and timely information, advice and guidance to help them choose the right course. Progression and transition planning are effective. Teachers provide clear advice on the options available to students for further study at either the college or elsewhere to ensure that students prepare well for their next step.
- Insufficient opportunities for meaningful work experience for students on study programmes mean that a high proportion of students do not have the chance to practise their skills in the workplace. However, the majority of teachers ensure that they plan realistic projects, based on the workplace, as part of the courses students take. Good examples of these include high-standard kitchens, restaurants and salons where students gain the skills needed for employment. In areas where planning is less effective students are placed at a disadvantage when seeking work. For example, construction students are not routinely entered for the on-site health and safety certification which they need to enter any building site.
- Teachers' promotion of equality and diversity within lessons is inconsistent. In hairdressing, teachers prepare well and initiate discussions on suitable approaches to a wide variety of clients, including those with mental health difficulties. In other areas, teachers use topical or work-related equality issues. For example, business administration students discussed an office environment and the design considerations for wheelchair users. However, in less effective lessons planning is limited to the learning resources used in class, and fails to extend students' thinking around the wider issues.

Engineering and motor vehicle**16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes**

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and reflect success rates that are low. Students' progress towards their learning goals in the majority of lessons and over time is slow. At the start of a minority of courses, teachers do not challenge students sufficiently well to aim for high grades. However, the majority of students enjoy their courses and develop skills that equip them for the engineering or motor trade.
- In the smaller number of better lessons, teachers use a variety of interesting and vocationally relevant activities. Consequently, students develop new knowledge and skills rapidly. For example, in one lesson the teacher used information and learning technology (ILT) well to illustrate the technique of repairing a damaged seat cover due to a cigarette burn. After a short video, and following an excellent teacher demonstration, students were able to practise their repair skills on car seat materials.
- In the less effective lessons, teachers do not challenge poor punctuality. Activities centre on the teacher and consequently students lose interest, become bored and learning is slow. In the majority of motor vehicle theory lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient extension activities to motivate the more able students to broaden their knowledge and understanding. As a result, students who complete tasks early have nothing to do while they wait for the rest of the group.
- Teachers use the industry-standard electronic engineering laboratories and equipment, and motor vehicle specialist facilities and workshops well to promote learning and develop students' practical skills. However, a minority of the cars are outdated and motor vehicle students do not benefit from working on newer models. Teachers promote health and safety practices well in the workshops, particularly in the use of personal protective equipment.
- Students adopt well industry practices, for example using job cards in motor vehicle workshops, which help them to gain an understanding of the workplace. They use tools and specialist equipment confidently and with due care. A few students do get the opportunity to carry out a range of work related activities, for example modifying motorcycles, and advanced airbrush painting and rectification work on classic cars at the college. However, the majority of students do not benefit from work placements and this requires improvement.
- The large majority of teachers and students use the virtual learning environment (VLE) effectively. Teachers frequently indicate to students how to best use the learning resources on the VLE, including course notes, tests and presentations. Students access these away from the college and this allows them to develop their ability to work independently.
- Teachers' assessment of students' work is inconsistent. In the better examples, teachers check learning and understanding frequently and provide good oral and written feedback on assignments that are marked and returned promptly. Teachers do not plan or manage the less effective assessments well enough and they do not check individual students' competence and understanding, with the result that students do not know which skills they need further practise at.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Teachers provide students with a detailed pre-course information pack that explains, in detail, the course requirements, progression routes and expectations. In addition, managers run taster courses and open evenings throughout the year that ensure that students are on the appropriate courses and that they know exactly what to expect from the course when they come to enrol.
- Experienced and knowledgeable teachers provide good support. Teachers assess students' starting points thoroughly and accurately and identify their support needs. They quickly put in

place additional learning support arrangements and these are effective in providing students with the help they need to progress and achieve.

- Teachers thoroughly integrate the mathematics that students need to be successful on their courses into lessons. However, a few students do not acquire the mathematics qualifications that they need to progress to higher levels of study or training rapidly enough. Teachers do not routinely correct poor English in students' written work.
- The promotion and integration of equality and diversity in the curriculum is underdeveloped. For example, teachers pay insufficient attention to ensuring that students understand and respect the diversity of the clients that they will be working with.

Building and construction

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in students' achievements that are at or above the national rate. Students produce very high-standard practical work and make good progress. They also develop good work related, personal and social skills.
- Students acquire knowledge and skills quickly that prepare them well for the next stage in their education or employment. Students are successful in regional competitions reflecting the quality and accuracy of their work. Students' behaviour and attitudes towards work are very good. Teachers set themselves as good role models due to their own vocational experience. They manage health and safety very well and students demonstrate appropriate respect for, and care of, the tools and equipment they use. Teachers make good use of resources including information and communication technology (ICT) and the VLE to contribute to developing learning outside the classroom.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge and considerable site experience well to develop a range of interesting activities that constantly challenge students to learn by doing, thinking and checking. They have high expectations for all students. They adopt strategies that together with good support allow rapid gains in knowledge and skills. Students' practical work and theory is at the appropriate level in the majority of lessons. However, in a very few lessons, teachers' planning is insufficient and as a result students already working part time in the industry find the work too easy.
- Teaching develops students' resilience, confidence and independence when building complex models and producing decorative finishes. This is reinforced by a wide range of realistic projects which bring students into contact with the public and employers. For example, students work at the Suffolk Showground refurbishing benches and seating and repairing and painting fences in preparation for the Suffolk Show.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to participate in work placements with employers. Whilst a minority of students have obtained part-time employment through their own efforts, the majority have no opportunity to work in the construction industry. Managers do not have a sufficiently robust plan to develop links with local employers. As a result, students have never worked on site.
- Students work well in groups of differing ability and experience to share their ideas and improve their collaborative working skills. Teachers place those students who have no experience of work with those that do to share workplace techniques. In a lesson on unvented hot water systems, the teacher skilfully linked students in small groups to maximise the support they offered to each other.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Teachers assess students' abilities, skills and motivation carefully before they start the course which they then use well to plan for and assess

students' progress. Teachers provide clear verbal feedback on how well students have done and what they need to do to improve.

- Students find the highly-visible tracking and monitoring charts particularly helpful. Teachers record students' progress on easy-to-read wall charts in each workshop and classroom. Students discuss their progress at frequent intervals with personal tutors. However, in a minority of cases teachers and tutors do not record progress in students' portfolios and assessment documents with sufficient detail.
- The development of students' mathematics in both theory and practical lessons is good. Students interpret site drawings well and develop accurate measurement skills. Classrooms and workshops have helpful posters with guidance and tips on the principles of geometry and trigonometry. Teachers regularly challenge students in lessons to calculate quantities of materials and develop costings for projects. Teachers do not routinely check students' spelling and grammar and, as a result, students' use of English requires improvement. Teachers do not highlight key words sufficiently to develop students' technical vocabulary.
- Teachers help foster good working relationships in classes. They know their students well and therefore give them valuable and well-targeted support. Teachers use opportunities in lessons to challenge stereotypes. However, teachers miss opportunities to develop broader diversity themes such as exploring with students the challenges of working in occupied properties or with clients from different age groups.

Hospitality and catering

16-19 study programmes
19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflecting the rapid progress of current students and the impact of actions taken to improve the proportion who achieve their qualification. Students present themselves well in their different uniforms and demonstrate safe working practices in the college's well-equipped kitchens, restaurant and café. They produce and serve food of a high standard.
- Teachers plan lessons well. They use detailed profiles of students to inform their planning and ensure that all students are able to make progress. In the better lessons, teachers use a particularly effective approach to the development of students' skills and knowledge of foodstuffs and build students' confidence in their own ability by encouraging them to coach others and to participate in demonstrations to their peers in practical classes.
- Teachers use ILT well to raise expectations of performance and instil attention to detail in their students. Examples include live streaming of students working in the kitchens into the restaurant during service and the recording of students demonstrating key practical skills. These contribute to a video clip bank that acts as a valuable resource to other students and that teachers use to promote hospitality courses to potential students. Teachers upload the VLE with plenty of high-standard learning materials and they are constantly seeking ways to develop the VLE further. For example, students on courses at level 3 use it to share their learning journals with their teacher which helps provide close monitoring and prompt feedback.
- Students develop good employability skills and this is improving further. Teachers extend the employment opportunities and understanding of working in the sector for students on courses at levels 1 and 2 by entering them for qualifications in food preparation and food service or customer care. They volunteer to work alongside their teachers on a range of internal and external functions that broadens their experience of working to industry standards. Students benefit from a limited, but expanding network of employers offering work placements.

Assignments challenge students to compete against each other to produce the most current and appealing dishes to appear on menus at themed events.

- The majority of assessment practice is good. Teachers plan assessments well and accurately assess performance and provide motivating feedback that confirms achievement. Students self-assess their own performance realistically and identify key areas for improvement in their diary sheets. However, a minority of teachers provide insufficient written feedback in students' folders on how the student can improve.
- Teachers track and monitor students' progress well. They negotiate individual targets with students and monitor them through regular one-to-one reviews that cover all aspects of the students' studies. Although the majority of targets could be more specific, students are well aware of their own progress and targets for improvement. Teachers challenge students who have completed all their formal assessments to add new dishes to the menu to extend their skills beyond qualification requirements.
- Teachers and learning support assistants provide good levels of support in theory and practical lessons and employed apprentices support the progress of students in the restaurant, kitchens and café. Teachers take a firm, but supportive approach to change behaviour if students need help in this area. They inform parents and carers of the progress of those in their care. Students needing support to progress attend transitional workshops where they gain valuable experience of the next level to see if it is the right step for them to take.
- The development of English and mathematics is adequate. In the better lessons, teachers embed the acquisition of English and mathematical skills into hospitality and catering subjects. However, teachers do not routinely correct spelling, punctuation and grammar when they are marking students' work.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well through cultural events and assignment work. A successful 'Foods around the World' activity that originated in the hospitality and catering department has now been adapted for use in several vocational areas across the college. Students demonstrate respectful behaviour at all times.

Foundation English

16-19 study programmes

19+ Learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement to ensure that all students receive high-standard teaching and support that challenges them to achieve and succeed on their English courses. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is reflected in the low proportion of students that achieve their qualifications, although in-year college data indicates an improvement through this academic year.
- GCSE teachers have high expectations of students. In these lessons, students develop skills and knowledge through well-planned activities that challenge and motivate them to make rapid progress. Teachers plan lessons well and pay particular attention to matching the level of work to the students' particular needs. Students value the knowledge and skills of teachers that help them to develop their ability to work independently in preparation for progress to higher education, employment or further study.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in functional skills English require improvement. In the better lessons, teachers plan activities well to interest and motivate students. However, in the larger number of less effective lessons teachers use a range of resources and teaching strategies that is too restrictive and does not allow all students to make expected progress. They do not plan to ensure that during a lesson each student will develop new skills and become better prepared for their tests. Teachers do not routinely use questioning to check or

consolidate learning. A small minority of teachers are not skilled at managing group sessions well enough to ensure that all students participate and benefit from the activity.

- Teachers’ use of ILT to support their teaching is inconsistent. GCSE students use the VLE for appropriate resources that allow them to consolidate their understanding. In an entry-level functional skills class students were confident to use the interactive whiteboard to identify different aspects of English terminology. However, the interactive resources available to students on functional skills courses are not sufficiently effective in developing skills or preparing them for their examinations.
- Support for students in the classroom is good. Teachers and learning support assistants plan collaboratively to ensure students with specific additional needs receive good support. Students who require additional help value the opportunities to access the good support from advisers in the ‘Learning Curve’.
- Teachers assess students’ skills at the start of their courses accurately and place students on the appropriate level of study. However, they do not use this information sufficiently well to plan for the progress of individual students once they have started their course. Teachers ensure that students benefit from appropriate guidance about the skills that they will require to progress to the next level, and this serves as an effective way of raising their aspirations.
- Teachers’ assessment of students’ progress requires improvement, particularly in functional skills. The marking of work is inconsistent and feedback is insufficiently constructive to resolve spelling and grammatical mistakes. Teachers do not set precise enough targets to ensure that students know exactly what to do to improve and consequently a minority of students have to take the writing component of the test on multiple occasions with little prospect of success. Where teachers are assessing students’ progress effectively, they use a range of strategies including quizzes, interactive activities, short tests, and the use of peer and self-assessment.
- Students work in safe and welcoming learning environments. They respect each other’s values and beliefs. Students appreciate the good range of opportunities to explore equality and diversity through classroom activities when opportunities arise.

<p>Foundation mathematics</p> <p>16-19 study programmes</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. The proportion of students achieving their qualifications is around the same level as for other, similar colleges. However, college data for this academic year indicate that students’ achievement rates are going to fall slightly. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good for GCSE students, significantly better than it is for the larger number of students taking functional skills.
- In the minority of better lessons, students progress well. Teachers plan learning skilfully to meet the vocational interests of students and to enable them to use their mathematics in everyday life. Students are able to quickly understand how these skills can be used and then to apply them. For example, students were able to work out simple ratio using one part concentrate squash and four parts water to provide a diluted solution. Construction students effectively produced a quote for kitchen units using multiplication, division and measuring skills.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively in all lessons, for example to illustrate to students each step of a calculation or using a formula. Photographs and drawings illustrate well to the students how the formula can be applied in day-to-day activities, such as calculating pay using annual, weekly and hourly rates.
- In the majority of lessons that require improvement, students make insufficient progress. Teachers do not plan successfully to ensure that each student is working towards challenging

goals. Too often, teachers provide students with the same level of work when following different levels of qualification. As a result, a few higher-level students are not able to carry out simple calculations such as ten per cent of 80 and do not know basic equivalences, for example how many weeks in a year or how many centimetres in a metre.

- Teachers’ feedback to students requires improvement. Although students have a good understanding of their progress on tasks in lessons, written feedback varies in quality and does not always sufficiently identify how students are going to improve. Too often teachers do not plan revision activities to develop the specific skills a student needs to support them to achieve. Consequently, although students have the opportunity to re-sit examinations, too many students re-sit on multiple occasions when the prospect of them achieving is unrealistic because teachers have not ensured that they are properly prepared.
- Teachers ensure that they have an accurate assessment of students’ starting points through comprehensive initial testing. As a result, students are on an appropriate level of study. Teachers identify where individual students require additional help and ensure that appropriate support is available.
- Learning support for students is helpful in providing additional opportunities to develop their skills. Teachers work closely with the ‘Learning Curve’ advisers to provide effective individual support on concepts that students find difficult. Learning support assistants are adept at enabling students to understand how to use mathematical formulae in a range of different contexts.
- Teachers integrate equality and diversity appropriately into lessons. They encourage students to take turns in answering questions and to respect others’ opinions. Mathematical resources that teachers use to develop skills in data handling, percentages and ratio include topics of disability, gender and race, for example using data to calculate what percentage of disabled people are wheelchair users.

Business	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and reflect the outcomes for apprentices that are low. Although the majority of apprentices successfully achieve their apprenticeship, too many do not complete in the time expected. All apprentices develop effective employability skills in a good range of local workplaces, including the local county and borough councils. The large majority of apprentices who complete their programme go on to further learning, sustainable employment or higher education.
- Apprentices develop good personal and business skills through practical activities in the workplace. Assessors use their good vocational skills and experience to provide effective support for apprentices. They have a good understanding of employers’ high expectations of their apprentices’ performance, particularly when working with customers. However, assessors do not challenge apprentices sufficiently to ensure they make good progress relative to their starting point.
- Apprentices enjoy their work and increase their confidence and independent working skills. Good support from interested employers helps apprentices develop transferable employability skills including increased self-confidence which apprentices use effectively in tasks such as dealing with customers. For example, an apprentice working in a school organised trips which required communicating with parents and colleagues, managing the bookings and setting and sticking to a budget. Apprentices improve their skills in a wide range of administrative and management tasks, for example developing strategies to promote more effective supervision. They use a

broad and appropriate range of computer applications, for activities such as diary management and producing leaflets and posters.

- Teachers rightly set targets that relate to the completion of assessment tasks, but they pay insufficient attention to supporting personal development or building on the learning opportunities available in the workplace. Assessors offer only rarely learning opportunities other than workbooks for apprentices to complete. Insufficient additional materials and resources are available to enable apprentices to extend or reinforce their learning between assessors' visits.
- Assessors do not make enough use of information from initial assessment and current performance to set apprentices appropriately challenging targets. Targets largely relate to completion of tasks, rarely include objectives to support the development of independent learning and thinking skills and nor do they take into consideration apprentices' long-term goals or any wider aspects of their development.
- Progress reviews for business and administration apprentices take place regularly. Employers participate well and they are interested in the progress their apprentices make. Employers' views on progress, including an evaluation of the apprentice's effort, attainment and areas for skills development to support employability, contribute to future targets. However, short-term targets set during progress reviews are not clear enough to guide apprentices in the next steps of their vocational training.
- The frequency of progress reviews for a few apprentices on finance apprenticeships is poor, where apprentices have not received a progress review for a lengthy period. In a few reviews, questions are insufficiently challenging to support apprentices to reflect fully on their practice in the workplace.
- Apprentices receive motivational verbal feedback from assessors. Written feedback is often minimal, lacking the detail to provide sufficient support to guide apprentices to improve their work. The checking of apprentices' written work is not always sufficiently thorough and assessors do not correct spelling and grammatical errors.
- Assessors provide comprehensive information and advice to guide apprentices, at the start of their apprenticeship and throughout training. In collaboration with employers, assessors effectively guide apprentices in the selection of optional units that will complement their job roles and future career aspirations. Apprentices have a good understanding of the requirements of the apprenticeship and potential progression opportunities, which assessors encourage apprentices to explore throughout their apprenticeship.
- Assessors ask apprentices about equality and diversity at reviews, but the questions they use to assess apprentices' understanding are at best perfunctory and mechanistic.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. The college failed to meet a number of key targets regarding outcomes for students in 2012/13. The senior leadership team took swift action to identify the reasons and make changes to management and staff in a number of subject areas. However, the pace of improvement across the college this year varies too much.
- The governing body has a clear understanding of areas for improvement as well as the strengths of the college. The board provides a reasonable level of challenge to the senior leaders, but members recognise that they monitored some aspects of the college work last year more rigorously than others. In the current year, the board is giving more attention to assessment of students' work and the quality of evidence underlying predicted outcomes for students.
- Monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment is effective. Managers take action quickly where college observers identify poor practice in lessons. Targeted staff development is in place

and, where re-observation shows no improvement, managers implement capability procedures. Inspectors found no examples of inadequate lessons. Where college observers judge that lessons have a few strengths, but require improvement overall, action is also taken to develop teaching skills further or move to the capability process. The system covers sub-contracted work and apprenticeships in the workplace as well as college-based work. All teachers in the college receive a substantial amount of high-standard staff development, but this is too limited for assessors of work-based training.

- A range of management of staff performance measures, including termly reviews of subject areas and observations of teaching, have significantly improved a minority of areas this year, for example hospitality and catering. However, within the six subject areas inspected in detail, a number of areas for improvement remain.
- The range of subjects the college offers generally matches well the skills priorities within the local economy and the needs of the community. Employers are involved in advising on the curriculum in a number of subject areas, but not in all.
- Students aged 16 to 18 on the study programme, who have not previously achieved GCSE mathematics grade A*-C, are not all taking a mathematics qualification in the current year. Managers have substantive plans in place to remedy this next year. The embedding of the development of English and mathematics within lessons takes place only in a minority of subject areas. The study programme has insufficient provision of work experience and work-related learning. Managers recognised this in last year's self-assessment report and more opportunities are in place this year, for example projects with employers.
- Partnership work contributes well to the curriculum. Students on performing arts courses benefit from close links with the local theatre. Business studies students are involved in projects with a local 'Women in Rural Enterprise' network aimed at developing employability skills. Links with the local council help to make possible work placements for a minority of students. 'Fellows of the College' from a wide range of organisations also contribute to the development of provision in subject areas.
- The self-assessment report for 2012/13 identified accurately that students' outcomes required improvement. However, it over-stated strengths in teaching, learning and assessment and did not analyse how this related to the drop in outcomes. Governors and managers' judgement on teaching, learning and assessment relied too heavily on evidence from graded lessons in the classroom and did not take sufficient account of other aspects, such as assessment practices. Considerable work is taking place this year to strengthen the latter.
- Managers listen effectively to the views of students via a range of methods and take action where appropriate. For example, the principal attends the college's student parliament where course representatives can raise concerns. Managers and staff feedback to students the actions they have taken as a result of their concerns. Managers and staff also take into account the views of employers during the self-assessment process.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is adequate. Managers monitor in detail the small number of incidents of bullying and harassment and have clear records of disciplinary action taken. They also now monitor comprehensively whether success rates for any groups of students are lower than others. In 2012/13, this was the case for students from a few minority ethnic groups. Managers and staff identified the reasons and put in place actions which have led to better retention for students from those groups in the current year. The student body is represented on the college's governing board and is involved fully in the decisions and actions that the corporation takes. The wider promotion of students' understanding of equality and diversity is too patchy across the college.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for the safeguarding of students. Appropriate training is in place for staff and links with relevant external agencies are good. Links also exist with other colleges to learn from good practice. Promotion of safe practices with students includes current issues of concern, for example the use of 'legal highs'.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Suffolk New College

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering	3
Motor vehicle	3
Building and Construction	2
Hospitality and Catering	2
Foundation English	3
Foundation mathematics	3
Business	3

Provider details

Type of provider	General further education college							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	5,618							
Principal/CEO	David Muller							
Date of previous inspection	December 2009							
Website address	www.suffolk.ac.uk							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
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+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	406	329	1,032	520	1,465	717	N/A	59
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	171	116	89	124	N/A	2		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	70							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	70							
Number of community learners	186							
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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ONIT programme – 4RCE Training ▪ ONIT programme – WS Training ▪ New Wolsey Theatre ▪ Limeskills. 							

Contextual information

Ipswich is the largest town in Suffolk. Compared to the rest of England, Ipswich has higher levels of deprivation and unemployment. Wages are lower than the national averages, particularly among women. The number of young people not in education, employment or training is above the national rate and rising. The proportion of the working population employed in managerial and professional posts is below the national rate, whereas the proportion working in the service industries is above. A lower percentage of residents are educated to level 3 than that nationally. The proportion of young people achieving five or more GCSE grades at A*-C, including English and mathematics, is about five percentage points below that for the whole of England.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Stewart Jackson HMI

Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the vice principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the college'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 relevant provision at the college. 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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To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk

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