



Suffolk College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published April 2006	Provider reference 130820
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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Suffolk College
Type of college:	College of further and higher education
Principal:	Professor Dave Muller
Address of college:	Rope Walk, Ipswich, IP4 1LT
Telephone number:	01473 255 885
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Chair of governors:	Reverend Peter Mortimer
Unique reference number:	130820
Name of lead inspector:	Garth Clucas, ALI
Dates of inspection:	27 February to 3 March 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Suffolk College is a large general further education college located in Ipswich. Approximately half of its provision is further education (FE) funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The majority of its other work is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council or the Department of Health. A programme of adult and community learning is provided on behalf of Suffolk County Council. The college offers programmes in all subject sector areas with the exception of agriculture, horticulture and animal care.
2. The catchment area for the college's FE provision extends to the wider Ipswich boundaries. Although overall the area is relatively affluent, there are some deprived wards in Ipswich. In January 2006 the proportion of unemployed people in Ipswich was 3.3% compared with 1.9% in the eastern region and 2.5% nationally.
3. There are 16 high schools within the catchment area. Five have their own sixth forms and a further eight have shared sixth form provision. In 2005 the proportion of school leavers with five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C in Suffolk was 58.3%, slightly above the national average for England of 57.1%. At the last census minority ethnic communities comprised 6.6% of the population of Ipswich.
4. In 2004/05 the college enrolled 8,300 learners funded directly by the Learning and Skills Council. Some 56% were female, 7% were from a minority ethnic background, and 8% declared a learning difficulty or disability. Of the total, 28% were studying full-time. Approximately 83% of full-time learners were aged 16 to 18. The largest numbers were enrolled on programmes in health, public services and care, and in art, media and performing arts. In addition, some 165 pupils aged 14 to 16 attended programmes at the college.
5. The college's community learning programme attracted 5,645 enrolments on to 313 courses in 2004/05 and there were 1,073 enrolments on learndirect programmes. In addition, there were 250 work-based learners of whom 205 were aged 16 to 18. Approximately 4,300 learners were undertaking HE programmes.
6. The college's mission is defined as "excellence through diversity".

Scope of the inspection

7. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:
- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
 - achievements and standards
 - quality of provision
 - leadership and management
 - specialist provision in: health, public services and care, science and mathematics, construction, information and communication technology (ICT), arts, media and performing arts, preparation for life and work, and the non-accredited community learning programme.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
Achievements and standards	Good: grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3

Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.

Curriculum areas

Health, public services, and care	Outstanding: grade 1
Science and mathematics	Inadequate: grade 4
Construction	Satisfactory: grade 3
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: grade 3
Arts, media and performing arts	Good: grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

8. Learners' achievements are good overall. Success rates on many courses have improved since the last inspection. For adult learners, most success rates are significantly above the national average. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are now above the national average at levels 1 and 2 and around the national average at level 3. Achievement in work-based learning and in key skills is poor.
9. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The identification of additional support needs is good. Learning support assistants are generally successful in enhancing learning. Assessment is satisfactory overall but procedures are not followed consistently in all curriculum areas.
10. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The college works well with community groups and strategic partners to widen participation in learning. The needs and interests of learners are met well. A wide range of courses is offered and there are well developed and productive links with employers and community agencies. Opportunities for enrichment on vocational programmes are good but the college-wide enrichment programme is underdeveloped.
11. Guidance and support are good. The provision of initial advice and guidance and induction are effective. The college caters well for learners with specific support needs. There is good tutorial support for individual learners although some group tutorials lack a clear purpose.
12. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors are well informed about the performance of the college. Ambitious plans for the creation of a new FE college are at an advanced stage of development. Strategic leadership is strong but curriculum management varies in quality. There is inconsistency in the setting and monitoring of targets. Staff appraisal lacks rigour. Procedures for quality assurance are improving and are effective in identifying areas for improvement. The college has been slow to address weaknesses in work-based learning, key skills, and the implementation of its skills for life strategy. Financial management is effective. The college provides good value for money.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

13. The college demonstrates a good capacity to improve its provision. Success rates of learners aged 16 to 18 improved significantly in 2004-05. The self-assessment process is good. The self-assessment report for 2004-05 provides an accurate and well-evidenced assessment of the college's strengths and weaknesses. Effective use is made of data to analyse performance and identify areas for improvement. Greater rigour has been brought to the college's lesson

observation scheme. Recent changes have been made in management roles to secure closer performance monitoring across the college.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

14. The college has maintained the strengths identified at the last inspection and made satisfactory progress in addressing most areas for improvement. Overall success rates have steadily improved and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced. In the curriculum areas inspected, there has been significant improvement in health, public services and care provision, but a decline in science and mathematics. The provision of IT resources is now satisfactory. Additional learning support has improved but it is not being effectively monitored and evaluated. Insufficient progress has been made in arrangements to share good practice. Deficiencies remain in the management and delivery of work-based learning, and in the provision of key skills.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- success rates for adults and retention rates for 16 to 18 year olds
- outstanding provision in health, public services and care
- the range of provision and opportunities for progression
- productive links with employers and the local community
- guidance and support for learners
- strategic leadership
- strong governance.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- success rates for 16 to 18 year olds on GCE A-level courses
- framework completion by work-based learners
- target setting and the monitoring of performance in curriculum areas
- monitoring of additional learning support
- the management and delivery of key skills
- the implementation of the skills for life strategy
- access for learners with impaired mobility.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: grade 2

Contributory grades:

Work-based learning

Inadequate: grade 4

15. Achievement and standards are good overall. The college success rate for learners on all programmes has steadily improved over the past three years and has remained above the national average for general further education colleges.
16. Success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 improved significantly in 2004/05. They are now above national averages at levels 1 and 2 and around the national average at level 3. Retention is good. Success rates on NVQs and long vocational courses at level 3 are consistently above the national average. However, GCE A-level success rates have declined to below the national average. The college-devised value added scheme shows that learners on health, public services and care courses make excellent progress relative to their qualifications at enrolment. Pass rates in key skills are poor.
17. Success rates for adult learners have shown continuing improvement over the past three years and in 2004-05 they were significantly above national averages at all levels. NVQ success rates have remained significantly above national averages at levels 2 and 3. GCE A-level success rates have risen above the national average.
18. Success rates for both age groups on short courses of 1-4 weeks duration have been consistently above national averages. Success rates for courses of 5-24 weeks duration have improved to slightly above the national average.
19. Achievement in work-based learning is inadequate. Success rates for framework completion by apprentices and advanced apprentices are poor. Too few work-based learners complete their qualifications within planned timescales. The overall success rate for NVQ completion in work-based learning has improved to the national average.
20. Learners make good progress to higher level courses within the college and to further training or employment. Provision offered by the college for learners aged 14 to 16 has been successful in encouraging them to enrol onto FE courses.
21. Learners are generally well motivated and enjoy their studies. They achieve a high standard of practical work on many vocational programmes, for example in arts, media and performing arts, construction, and health, public services and

care. Adult learners studying non-accredited programmes at the college and in the community develop good practical skills.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

22. Inspectors agreed with the college's evaluation that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced. In the most effective lessons, good planning ensures that the needs of all learners are successfully met. Teachers use a variety of techniques and strategies to reinforce and enhance learning. The teaching of practical work is safe with clear links made between theory and practice. Good demonstrations and supportive interventions by teachers assist learners working at different levels.
23. In less successful lessons there is a lack of planning and little or no consideration of the needs of all learners. Teachers talk too much and learning is rarely checked effectively. There is not enough use of assessment data to plan learning and little focus on learning outcomes. The provision of information and learning technology has improved following recent investment, although some teachers have not yet developed sufficient confidence to use the new equipment to best effect.
24. The provision of additional learning support has improved since the last inspection. All full-time learners are assessed for additional support needs on entry to the college and identified support requirements are provided in good time. Learning support assistants are generally successful in enhancing learning. However their role in some lessons lacks direction. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of support.
25. Assessment practice and arrangements to monitor learners' progress are satisfactory overall. Written feedback is variable in quality. In the best examples, assessed work is marked promptly and returned with helpful and clear comments. In other cases, feedback is insufficiently detailed and does not identify how the work can be improved. In GCE A-level mathematics and some science subjects insufficient homework is set. The college has made slow progress in developing systems to record and monitor learners' progress on non-accredited programmes.
26. The college recognises that there is poor performance in key skills. It has recently introduced a number of measures to improve their delivery, integration and management across the college. Although there are indications of improvement, it is too early to determine whether these will be sustained.
27. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The college works well with a number of community groups and other strategic partners to widen participation in learning. The community learning programme makes good provision for older learners.

28. The needs and interests of learners are met well. The college offers a broad range of courses with clear progression routes and a variety of modes of attendance. Vocational courses have a good focus on the needs of the local community. Links with employers are good. Good quality work experience features in most vocational courses. The college has developed effective partnerships with local schools in its well managed provision for learners aged 14 to 16.
29. There are good enrichment activities on many vocational courses including opportunities to participate in competitions and local community events. However, the college has not established a formal cross-college enrichment programme. Enrichment opportunities are narrow for GCE A-level students.
30. There are regular opportunities for learners to feedback their views on all aspects of college life. The college closely analyses these and responds to them effectively.
31. Guidance and support for learners are good. There is effective provision of initial information, advice and guidance. The college caters well for learners with a wide range of specific support needs. Learners have access to an appropriate range of information, counselling and welfare services. The college makes good use of specialist external agencies and Connexions personal advisors are based in the college full-time. The students' union also makes a good contribution to supporting learners.
32. Induction appropriately helps learners to settle into their course. Learners benefit from good informal opportunities to review their progress. Tutors give good support to individual learners. Formal arrangements to monitor learners' progress and set targets are satisfactory. Absences are routinely and quickly followed up. Progress reviews for work-based learners have been ineffective but are being improved. Group tutorials are of variable quality and some lack purpose. In a few curriculum areas there is insufficient space to conduct tutorials in private.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

33. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal provides strong strategic leadership that is communicated effectively throughout the college. The overall college success rate has steadily improved. A previous three year decline in the success rates for 16 to 18 year old learners was reversed in 2004-05 with a marked improvement in performance.
34. There is too much variation in the quality of curriculum leadership and management. Whilst there are some high performing curriculum areas, there has been insufficient consolidation of good practice to help other areas to improve. There is inconsistency in the setting and monitoring of targets. The college recognises that staff appraisal lacks rigour and is currently revising its systems. There has been slow progress in improving the quality of work-based

learning and the provision of key skills. The college's skills for life strategy has not yet been implemented.

35. Overall, quality assurance procedures are improving. The college's lesson observation system provides an accurate assessment of teaching and learning. Current procedures for course reviews and action planning for improvement are effective. The most recent self-assessment report provides an accurate and well-evidenced assessment of the college's work.
36. Collaboration with external stakeholders is highly productive. Well formulated plans are in place for the building of a new further education college on the existing site and for the disaggregation of the HE provision to form a separate University Campus. Governors have played a strong and effective role in developing the plans to create the new institutions. They are well informed about the college and its strengths and weaknesses. However, they do not formally evaluate their own performance.
37. The college's response to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 is satisfactory. The college analyses and monitors its performance against equality and diversity measures effectively. There are good initiatives to promote diversity and equality. However, despite a number of adaptations to old and inflexible buildings, learners with impaired mobility find it difficult to gain direct access to some areas of the campus. The college has appropriate procedures for child protection.
38. Effective financial and resource management has helped the college achieve its educational priorities. The overall college learning environment is satisfactory with good specialist resources in some areas. There has been recent substantial investment in ICT. Staff are generally well qualified and have good vocational experience. The college provides good value for money.

Curriculum area inspections

Health, public services and care

Outstanding: grade 1

Context

39. Full-time courses in health and social care and public services are offered at levels 2 and 3 and in early years at levels 1 to 3. NVOs are available in care and early years, and there is a range of short courses and provision to meet the needs of specific employers and community groups. There are 325 learners enrolled on full-time courses, mostly aged 16 to 18, and 211 learners on part-time courses. In addition, 37 learners aged 14 to 16 attend vocational courses.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on most courses
- excellent progress relative to prior attainment
- very responsive partnership arrangements meeting local employer and community needs
- very effective individual guidance and support
- outstanding leadership and management.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ineffective work placement arrangements on the national diploma in science (health studies) course.

Achievement and standards

40. Achievements and standards are outstanding. Success rates are well above national averages on most courses and there are high proportions of higher grades. Learners make excellent progress relative to their prior attainment. Attendance, punctuality and behaviour are very good. Learners work well together in lessons; their written work is generally of a high standard and they make very relevant and focussed contributions to discussions. Progression to further study or employment is good.

Quality of provision

41. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned. In the best lessons theory and practice are clearly linked and learners benefit from the vocational expertise of staff. Initial assessment identifies individual learning needs effectively and these are responded to promptly. Additional support staff work well with identified learners. Assessment is thorough. Learners receive comprehensive feedback on strengths and ways to improve their work.

42. Very responsive partnership arrangements are in place. A Centre of Vocational Excellence in care is currently in development in collaboration with two neighbouring colleges. The college works particularly well with the local NHS hospital trust and Suffolk County Council to ensure provision is responsive to the needs of local employers. There is good provision for 14 to 16 year olds in early years and public services.
43. Learners following public services courses benefit from an extensive range of enrichment opportunities. Learners on the national diploma in science (health studies) course lack appropriate access to work placements to support their studies.
44. Guidance and support are good. There are effective arrangements to inform potential learners about courses available and possible career choices. Induction arrangements are very good. Learners receive very effective individual support through personal tutors. There is a minimum entitlement of a six weekly progress review where detailed targets are set and monitored. However, group tutorials are less well planned.

Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management are outstanding. There is a very strong culture of continuous improvement. Quality assurance procedures are effective. Self-assessment is accurate and well evidenced. There is thorough monitoring of action plans and performance against targets. Resources are generally good and efficiently deployed. Staff have a good range of relevant qualifications and subject knowledge. Classrooms are well equipped. Teachers make effective use of good opportunities for professional development.

Science and mathematics

Inadequate: grade 4

Context

46. The college offers a good range of GCSE, AS and GCE A-level courses in science and mathematics. Slightly more than half of the 480 learners on AS and GCE A-level courses are over 19 years of age. A number of 'fast track' learners attend both the AS and the GCE A-level courses in the same year. Approximately 150 learners are on courses leading to GCSE qualifications in mathematics, human physiology and health and science of whom 84 are over 19 years of age. A first diploma in applied science was introduced in 2005-06 with small numbers.

STRENGTHS

No key strengths identified.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates on GCE A-level courses
- low pass rates on GCSE courses
- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- inadequate curriculum management.

Achievement and standards

47. Achievement and standards are poor. Success rates on the majority of level 3 courses are substantially below national averages. GCSE pass rates at grades A* to C grades are below the national average. Retention rates have improved on many courses but are still generally below average. Learners frequently lack confidence in the subjects they are studying and make slow progress, although there are good levels of debate in a few subjects. Learners apply themselves well to practical work and enjoy the challenge of the activity.

Quality of provision

48. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. There are too many lessons where teachers talk for too long with insufficient involvement of learners. There are not enough checks on learning and understanding. Many teachers lack confidence in using ICT. The teaching of practical skills is generally effective. In the better lessons there are many changes of activity which helps to maintain learners' interest.
49. The results of initial screening tests are not used systematically to plan lessons or identify additional support requirements. Action points from progress reviews are frequently not helpful in promoting good study disciplines. Learners do not complete sufficient work outside of lessons. The work that is handed in is often marked well with useful annotations.

50. Insufficient consideration is given to meeting the particular needs of learners on the 'fast track' programme. Learners on science and mathematics courses have little opportunity to extend their learning through enrichment activities.
51. Teachers make themselves readily available to learners. Additional workshops are offered in mathematics and less formally in the science subjects. However, attendance is very low and there is no compulsion for those who are underperforming to attend or complete remedial work. The identification of learners at risk is not sufficiently timely or rigorous.

Leadership and management

52. Leadership and management are inadequate. Target setting is not well embedded. The system for managing staff workloads is underdeveloped. Appraisal has not been carried out in the last 12 months and staff action plans for professional development are weak. Classrooms frequently lack sufficient subject identity and learning stimuli. Some aspects of quality assurance are improving. The latest self-assessment report is thorough and generally accurate. Performance data are well used by managers to evaluate the provision.

Construction

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

53. The college offers NVQ levels 2 and 3 in a full range of construction crafts, as well as professional and technical courses. Current enrolments comprise 143 learners aged 16 to 18, 38 aged 19 and over and 25 apprentices following work-based learning programmes. Craft programmes in carpentry and brickwork are also offered for 14 to 16 year old learners.

STRENGTHS

- broad range of programmes
- high standards of practical work
- good links with employers.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low completion of apprenticeship frameworks
- ineffective delivery of key skills in some craft areas
- insufficient workplace assessment
- insufficient classroom accommodation.

Achievement and standards

54. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Success rates on most courses at levels 2 and 3 are in line with national averages. Levels of retention have improved on most courses. However, on the level 1 course in painting and decorating, success rates are below the national average. There are low completion rates for apprenticeship frameworks on most work-based learning programmes. Learners develop their skills well both at college and in the workplace; they have a good understanding of health and safety. Progression opportunities, including to higher education, are good.

Quality of provision

55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers make effective use of their industrial experience and plan lessons well. In the majority of lessons a good mix of teaching methods, and competent use of visual aids, works well to engage and motivate learners. In less effective lessons, learners are given little opportunity to play an active part in their learning. In some craft areas, such as brickwork, key skills are not well integrated with the vocational content of the course and progress made is slow. Assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress on college based programmes are satisfactory. There is insufficient assessment of learners' performance in the workplace.

56. The college's broad range of construction programmes meets the needs of both learners and employers. The provision for 14 to 16 year olds is effective and well planned. The college has developed good links with employers. They enhance learning well by presenting seminars, arranging taster events and attending college award ceremonies.
57. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Learners are appropriately inducted on to programmes; they receive satisfactory careers guidance and personal support.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new management structure is being implemented, supported by closer senior management involvement. Standards have recently risen, although target setting and performance monitoring remains an area for improvement. The self-assessment report is accurate and makes good use of the views of learners. Classroom accommodation is insufficient for some provision, particularly in brickwork where there is no specialist work area.

Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

59. The college offers a range of ICT courses for full and part-time learners. These include a GNVQ foundation ICT, first and national diplomas for Information Technology Practitioners (ITP), AS and GCE A-levels. There are part-time courses in computer aided design (CAD) and the Certificate for IT Users. The college also offers an online learning programme through learndirect. Current enrolments comprise 139 full-time and 22 part-time learners aged 16 to 18. There are 124 adult learners, the majority of whom study part-time.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on part-time courses for adults
- high pass rates on the GNVQ foundation course
- good teaching.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- poor success rates on GCE A-level courses
- poor achievement of key skills
- insufficiently detailed feedback on assessed work.

Achievement and standards

60. Achievements and standards are satisfactory overall. During the last three years success rates on the City and Guilds CAD and the Certificate for IT Users courses have been above the national average. There are high pass rates on the GNVQ foundation course. Success rates on long vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 are satisfactory. However, success rates on GCE A-level courses are significantly below the national average. Achievement on the IT key skills programme is poor. Learners' practical skills are well developed on vocational programmes.

Quality of provision

61. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well planned and structured. In the most successful lessons an appropriate mix of teaching techniques is used to maintain learners' interest and stimulate learning. Teachers regularly check learners' understanding and skilfully use questions to encourage group discussion and draw on learners' expertise and knowledge. They set challenging tasks for learners.
62. The suitability and rigour of assessment is satisfactory overall. However, in some cases feedback on assessed work is insufficiently detailed; learners are not given a clear indication as to how their work can be improved. The range of

provision is satisfactory. Part-time learners benefit from access to the learndirect provision.

63. Guidance and support for learners are good. Tutors are sensitive to individual needs and ensure learners receive appropriate advice on progression routes. Learning support assistants are used productively and are fully involved in the lesson planning and delivery.

Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Team meetings are conducted and documented well. Support for teachers is generally effective but there is insufficient occupational staff training. The course review and evaluation processes are thorough. There is a gender imbalance on most courses which the college is seeking to redress. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate.

Arts, media and performing arts

Good: grade 2

Context

65. The majority of learners in arts, media and performing arts are aged 16 to 18 and study full-time on first and national diploma courses. Other provision includes an introductory level 1 course and a part-time foundation course in art and design. Around 260 learners are currently enrolled on courses in art and design, 96 on media and 67 on courses in performing arts.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on many courses
- good standards of work
- effective use of initial assessment to support individual learners
- good range of enrichment activities
- good leadership and management.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- insufficient key skills development and integration
- insufficient focus on learning outcomes in some lessons
- inappropriate accommodation in performing arts.

Achievement and standards

66. Achievement and standards are good. Pass rates on most courses are at or above the national average. Retention rates are well above national averages and improving. Progression to higher education is good. Learners talk confidently about their work and are able to work independently. They demonstrate good levels of skill and creativity in their practical work. There is particularly good experimental work in animation, drawing, fashion, painting, musical theatre and video production.

Quality of provision

67. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations of learners. Project briefs are detailed and contain clear learning outcomes and assessment criteria; where appropriate, they identify contemporary cultural references for students to investigate. In some lessons, learning outcomes are not fully shared with learners. Key skills are not sufficiently well developed or effectively integrated with the vocational aspects of many courses.
68. Teachers make good use of initial assessment to support individual learners' needs and abilities. Work is assessed thoroughly and learners receive useful feedback on how to improve. Group critiques are particularly effective in evaluating learners' work.

69. Support for learners is good. Many of the staff are practising artists, designers and performers. The vocational experience of teachers is utilised well in providing careers guidance.
70. Learners benefit from a particularly good variety of enrichment activities including study visits to Europe and America and trips to galleries, studios, fashion houses and theatres. There are also projects involving local businesses and community organisations such as the Ipswich Caribbean Association, local radio and the Ipswich and Coastal Domestic Violence Forum.

Leadership and management

71. Leadership and management are good. The management team is effective in monitoring enrolments, learner achievement and retention against targets. There is good communication between managers and teachers. Good use is made of learner surveys in team action and development plans. The self-assessment report is generally accurate but it lacks sufficient rigour in the evaluation of teaching and learning. Specialist resources are good. In art and design and media, accommodation is effectively utilised. Some accommodation in performing arts is inappropriate and restricts opportunities for learning.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

72. There are approximately 400 part-time adult learners enrolled on skills for life courses from entry level to level 2. Half are studying courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Courses take place at the main college centre, in the community and in the workplace. Support is also provided for learners on full-time vocational programmes, including numeracy support for 110 learners aged 16 to 18. Some 32 learners aged 16 to 18 and 10 adults are enrolled on a full-time course for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

STRENGTHS

- high success rates on the full-time course for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- effective learning support
- effective engagement of community groups and employers.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- low success rates on ESOL and on entry level literacy programmes
- unsatisfactory attendance on adult part-time programmes
- insufficient feedback to learners on progress.

Achievement and standards

73. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on full-time programmes achieve well. In 2004-05, success rates improved significantly on adult literacy and numeracy programmes at levels 1 and 2. There are low success rates on entry level literacy and ESOL programmes. Attendance is unsatisfactory on part-time adult programmes.

Quality of provision

74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Team teaching is used well to help learners develop language, literacy and numeracy skills. Learning support assistants support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. Teachers make good use of ICT and interactive white boards. In weaker lessons, teachers do not make use of appropriate activities or a suitable range of learning materials to meet the needs of all learners. This results in lack of progress for some learners and insufficient challenge for more able learners.
75. There is good engagement with employers and the local community. Innovative partnerships with a range of community groups and employers have been

established. However, some of the short courses in the workplace programmes are not yet mapped to national standards.

76. Arrangements for initial advice and guidance and the assessment of learning needs at entry are satisfactory. However, the monitoring and recording of progress is inconsistent. Reviews are carried out but learners are not given sufficient feedback on progress and future learning needs. Individual learning targets are set but not adequately monitored.

Leadership and management

77. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new management team has introduced more rigour in the observation of teaching and learning. Communications are much improved. The self-assessment report is accurate. Development plans give a good analysis of the key improvements that are needed. The process for setting and monitoring targets at course level is underdeveloped. There has been slow implementation of the college's skills for life strategy and insufficient sharing of good practice. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, but some cramped classrooms make accessibility difficult for learners.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	02/03	1,129	57	56	1	901	52	55	-3
	03/04	1,144	45	60	-15	1,091	56	59	-2
	04/05	1,031	69		9	1,082	70		11
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	40	73	60	13	23	52	47	5
	03/04	23	52	65	-13	0		52	
	04/05	21	76		11	0			
NVQs	02/03	73	71	56	15	7	71	57	15
	03/04	72	69	61	8	2	100	62	
	04/05	88	68		7	1	100		
Other	02/03	1,016	55	56	-1	871	52	55	-3
	03/04	1,049	44	60	-16	1,089	56	59	-2
	04/05	922	69		9	1,080	69		10

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	02/03	1,115	57	52	5	796	60	49	10
	03/04	1,053	58	56	2	1,019	54	53	1
	04/05	1,048	63		7	861	69		16
GCSEs	02/03	147	52	57	-5	288	63	55	8
	03/04	168	53	61	-8	246	64	59	5
	04/05	256	61		0	244	64		5
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	300	72	59	14	54	93	53	40
	03/04	210	63	63	0	15	80	57	23
	04/05	50	74		11	5	60		3
NVQs	02/03	218	36	42	-7	210	49	49	-1
	03/04	182	69	52	17	216	61	53	7
	04/05	219	67		15	182	69		16
Other	02/03	450	58	50	8	244	58	48	10
	03/04	493	54	54	0	542	47	52	-6
	04/05	523	62		8	430	71		19

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	02/03	1,309	58	62	-4	1,383	52	51	1
	03/04	1,464	53	64	-10	1,450	55	53	2
	04/05	1,182	64		0	1,124	64		11
A/A2 Levels	02/03	173	79	82	-3	138	66	63	3
	03/04	198	69	84	-15	138	72	66	7
	04/05	136	72		-12	135	80		14
AS Levels	02/03	581	45	61	-16	322	54	48	5
	03/04	603	47	63	-15	286	53	50	4
	04/05	488	54		-9	307	57		7
GNVQs and precursors	02/03	400	60	50	10	87	57	45	12
	03/04	187	44	52	-8	28	50	43	7
	04/05	40	73		21	14	79		36
NVQs	02/03	34	85	51	35	194	44	45	0
	03/04	43	79	54	26	180	45	47	-2
	04/05	57	86		32	207	61		14
Other	02/03	121	69	55	13	642	51	54	-3
	03/04	433	57	56	1	818	55	56	-1
	04/05	461	70		14	561	66		10

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2003/04 to 2004/05

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	41	12	32	51	47
	Advanced	67	25	31	42	48
2004/05	Apprenticeship	75	13	38	56	48
	Advanced	42	19	34	50	48

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

b) Timely success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	43	9	16	37	24
	Advanced	73	15	19	29	30
2004/05	Apprenticeship	82	5	21	38	29
	Advanced	46	11	21	35	31

* The number of learners who planned to complete their learning programme in the given year

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

Table 5

Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the college 2002/03 to 2003/04

Year	Number of starts in year	Achieved Objectives *	Progression **	Still in learning
2002/03	7	6	3	
2003/04	8	8	6	

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period

Table 6

Outcomes for Employer Training Pilots managed by the college in 2005/06.

Year	Number of starts in year	Planned learning completed *	Still in learning
2005/06	5		5

* These are key learning objectives identified for each learner following an ETP or NETP programme