



# Sense East College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published May 2006	Provider reference 50015
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## Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Sense East College
Type of college:	Independent, resident, specialist
Head of service:	Roger Gale
Address of college:	72 Church Street, Market Deeping, Peterborough, PE6 8AL
Telephone number:	01778 382230
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Chair of governors:	Dr Katia Herbst
Unique reference number:	50015
Name of lead inspector:	Elaine Clinton, ALI
Dates of inspection:	22 and 23 March 2006

## Background of the organisation

1. Sense East College is a regional Independent Specialist College (ISC), operating in the areas of Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Northampton. It is part of the national organisation Sense, a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Overall management of the educational and residential services of the provision is through an Assistant Director. Currently 13 learners are funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). One learner is from a minority ethnic group. At the time of the inspection all learners were non-resident. One hundred and twenty seven learners are provided for through Sense East, all of whom are identified as being deafblind, hearing impaired or visually impaired. Most learners have severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities affecting emotional development and behaviour. Some learners have complex health needs. The majority of the learners are in long-term care places funded by health and social services.
2. Learners funded through the LSC are taught in five day services centres known as resource centres; in Peterborough, Dereham, Glenside, Kettering and Bourne. Since the previous inspection two day centres have been relocated and a new one opened at Bourne. A further new resource centre is being built in Peterborough to replace the existing centre. Twenty sites provide residential units. The college curriculum includes communication/literacy, numeracy, vocational skills, information and communication technology (ICT), learning through recreation, life skills and therapies. ICT is integrated into curriculum delivery. ASDAN and OCN courses are offered to some learners to provide opportunities for progression. Not all programmes offer an end qualification.
3. The college vision is to plan the best possible service to individuals through informed choice and rights and strives to fulfil the ethos of person centred planning through the use of a person centred approach.

## Scope of the inspection

4. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

*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.*

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: grade 2

5. Achievements are good. Learners make very good progress during their time at college and many exceed initial expectations. They make good gains in self-confidence and outstanding progress in communications and many gain national awards. However, these achievements gained over time are not sufficiently clearly documented. There are no differences between the achievements of different groups of learners. Rates of retention and attendance are very good and learners are punctual.
6. Teaching is good or better. The use of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) enables learners to participate well in classes. Baseline assessment is good. Individual learning plans are detailed and most contain meaningful and realistic targets. Lessons are well planned to meet the wide variety of learners' abilities. Behaviour management is excellent. Assessment is satisfactory and used to plan future learning.
7. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. Comprehensive procedures are well established to promote the safety, well being and protection of individual learners. Individual risk assessments are well developed. There are a good range of enrichment activities and satisfactory links with the local community. The college is not fully compliant with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RR(A)A).
8. Support and guidance are outstanding. Learners receive outstanding behavioural support and staff are provided with excellent training to manage learners' behaviour. The specialist multi-disciplinary teams make a significant contribution to ensuring learners are able to access the curriculum. Personal support and support in lessons is good. Regular multi-disciplinary meetings ensure staff are fully informed about learners. Links with the local Connexions service are satisfactory.
9. Leadership and management are good and appropriate actions have been taken to ensure that most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. Induction of new staff is outstanding. Quality assurance processes are good and rigorous application of the processes ensures consistency across the region. Self-assessment is thorough and accurate. Strategic and financial planning remain good.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

10. The college demonstrates good capacity to improve. The framework for quality assurance is good and ensures a high level of consistency across all of the

college's centres. Teaching and learning observations are regularly undertaken and lead to improvements in the quality of lessons. The college's self-assessment report is thorough and accurate. Most aspects of the subsequent action plans are effectively addressed. Staff show a good commitment to achieving even higher standards and share the same vision of the role of the college. The college provides good value for money.

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

11. The college has made good progress in addressing the key areas for improvement noted during the last inspection. There has been good improvement in the curriculum. This is now more relevant to the needs of each learner. Staff training and quality assurance have also brought about good improvement in the quality of targets that are set for each student. The requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) are now met. However, while there has been some improvement in the college's response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) the full requirements of this legislation are not yet met.

Key strengths of the college

*Strengths*

- outstanding development of communication skills
- good teaching
- good curriculum for personal development
- outstanding support and guidance
- good quality assurance.

Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- monitoring and recording of individual achievement
- the insufficient response to race relations legislation.

## Main findings

### Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

12. Learners' achievements and the quality of their work across the curriculum are good. They make good progress during their time at college and many exceed initial expectations. Where appropriate learners' achievements are recognised through a range of national awards. Many learners achieve literacy and numeracy qualifications. Learners' achievements are also recognised through a range of internal awards. However, these achievements gained over time are not consistently documented. This weakness is identified in the self-assessment report.
13. The development of learners' communication skills is outstanding. They make excellent progress in learning to use communication approaches appropriate to their individual need. For example, a learner who was only able to communicate using single words when he arrived at the college is now able to talk in short sentences and is beginning to use British Sign Language. Another learner has developed confidence in using his voice communication aid to participate in lessons and to explain how he is feeling.
14. Learners develop very good social and interpersonal skills that prepare them for adult life. They make good gains in the development of self-esteem and self-confidence and are successfully helped to manage their own behaviour. Learners are proud of their achievements and are enthusiastic about describing them. For example, when demonstrating a present that was made for Mother's Day or explaining the chosen name descriptors for staff and friends. Learners have good opportunities to increase their skills through a range of community-based leisure activities.
15. There are no differences between the achievements of different groups of learners. Baseline assessment is detailed with a range of literacy, numeracy and communication targets set. Achievement of targets is monitored at the end of each lesson and through the sixth monthly review process. A few targets are insufficiently specific. Rates of retention, punctuality and attendance are very good.

### Quality of provision

Good: grade 2

16. The quality of provision is good overall. Inspection outcomes support the college's self-assessment that the quality of teaching and learning is good or better. Staff have a very good understanding of learners' needs and lessons are planned to meet these needs and to challenge learners. Staff are well qualified and experienced and use their specialist knowledge well. They focus effectively on the development of appropriate behaviour, communication and social skills. Training for staff in the use of AAC has improved and is now good. Staff are



now confident in the use of AAC, signing, pictures and symbols to promote learning and to enable learners to participate in classes. Behaviour management is excellent and is successful in helping learners to behave appropriately.

17. Lessons are well planned to meet the wide variety of learners' abilities and contain a broad range of activities to maintain the learners' interest. Lesson plans are detailed and objectives are based on individual learning plans. They include a range of relevant activities and integrated targets in literacy, numeracy and communication. Activities are organised to enable learners to learn in a realistic setting. For example, learners are involved in a sandwich making service that involves taking the orders, buying the ingredients, making the sandwiches, delivering the orders and collecting the money. Communication between education, care staff and parents is good and ensures learning is reinforced outside of the classroom.
18. Pre-entry assessment remains comprehensive. Staff are now appropriately trained in visual and hearing assessment. Learners' equipment and therapeutic requirements are clearly documented. Baseline assessments are comprehensive and provide a reliable basis for measuring progress. Planned reviews take place six monthly, are effectively used to monitor progress and identify priority areas for target setting. Good communications with parents and carers have been established through this process. Assessing of learners' daily progress is satisfactory and is used to plan future lessons and activities. However, the small steps of incremental learning are insufficiently recorded and used to plan future learning. Inspectors agreed that there is a strong emphasis on the health and safety of learners by all staff.
19. The curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection. Each learner has an individualised programme based on their interests and likely future needs. The curriculum focuses exceptionally well on developing communication skills. This, along with the other elements of literacy and numeracy, is effectively embedded within all aspects learning. There are satisfactory opportunities to learn about and experience the world of work. Plans for further improvement through involvement in a social firm are well advanced. The personal and social development curriculum, together with the everyday approach of all staff, provides learners with good opportunities to develop healthy and safe lifestyles. There is a good range of enrichment activities, especially through special activity weeks.
20. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good, but the college is not fully compliant with recent race relations legislation. There is a clear focus on enabling learners to achieve their potential. They are supported to increase their involvement in decisions about their daily lives, educational and recreational activities. Learners participate in a wide range of programmes and community based activities. The college employs people from minority ethnic groups and with sensory impairments.

21. Support and guidance are outstanding. The specialist multi-disciplinary teams make a significant contribution to the learners' ability to communicate more effectively, access the curriculum and develop acceptable behaviour. Staff receive excellent on-going training in behavioural management and demonstrate very good behavioural management skills. Learners' support needs are reviewed and evaluated frequently and changed in response to changing needs. The multi-disciplinary teams are involved in all aspects of planning and reviewing a learners' progress. Communication between all staff is very good. Support assistants provide very good support to learners in the classroom. One-to-one tutorials are available as needed. The induction programme is thorough, however there is no accessible learner handbook. The college identified this in the self-assessment report and progress has been made in developing this. Transition planning is good, with realistic advice and guidance for future progression.

#### Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

21. Leadership and management are good. The effectiveness of this leadership and management is most clearly demonstrated in the clarity of the vision that all staff share about the purpose of the provision and their commitment to providing high quality education.
22. Quality assurance processes are good. This ensures that there are consistently high quality standards across all the centres of the college even though they stretch across a very wide area of the Eastern region. A series of regular meetings enables good practice and developments to be shared across all centres. Observation of teaching and learning is regularly undertaken, provides helpful guidance and has led to further improvement.
23. Self-assessment is thorough and accurate. It includes most of the key strengths and areas of improvement identified through inspection. There are detailed action plans to address aspects of provision requiring development. However, monitoring of the implementation of these plans does not sufficiently focus on the effects of actions taken.
24. The tutors and assistants successfully use their experience and expertise to match the needs of the learners well. Induction of new staff is outstanding. A comprehensive training and mentoring system ensures all new staff quickly learn important aspects of their role, including working with learners who have visual and hearing impairments, and managing challenging behaviour. Continuing professional development for established staff is also good. There is a broad range of topics covered within this training as well as annual updates, including aspects of health and safety and the protection of vulnerable adults. The arrangements for appraisal and supervision are good. Learning resources and accommodation are good.

25. There are suitable arrangements for safeguarding students, including rigorous recruitment procedures and training for staff concerning the protection of vulnerable adults.
26. The monitoring and promotion of equality of opportunity are good overall. There is careful checking to make sure that learners receive the support they require. The college meets the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001). Many adaptations have been made to help learners who have physical disabilities and further improvements are planned. The college is not fully compliant with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000). It monitors staff recruitment and has begun to monitor the recruitment and achievements of students according to their ethnicity, although does not use this information sufficiently. There is no action plan or timescales to ensure that the recent policy on racial awareness and discrimination is implemented.
27. Financial management is good; planning is matched well to priorities identified through self-assessment. The college provides good value for money.