



# Lowestoft College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

Better  
education  
and care

## Inspection report

Audience  
Post-sixteen

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130819

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## Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Lowestoft College
Type of college:	General Further Education
Principal:	Gwen Parsons
Address of college:	St Peter's Street, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 2NB
Telephone number:	01502 583521
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Chair of governors:	Robert Mee
Unique reference number:	130819
Name of lead inspector:	Garth Clucas, ALI
Dates of inspection:	26 February - 2 March 2007

## Background of the organisation

1. Lowestoft College is a medium-sized general further education college serving the district of Waveney in north-east Suffolk. In November 2006, the proportion of unemployed in Waveney was 3.6% compared with 2% for Suffolk, and 2.5% nationally. Lowestoft has four wards within the 10% most deprived on the index of multiple deprivation in England. At the last census, minority ethnic communities comprised 1.7% of the population of Waveney. In 2005, the proportion of school leavers with 5 or more GCSEs at A\* - C in Waveney was 49%, compared with the average for Suffolk of 58% and for England of 56%. All five high schools in Waveney have sixth forms and there is a sixth form college nearby.
2. The college specialises in vocational education and training. The largest areas of provision include health and public services, engineering, construction, retailing and commercial enterprise, and preparation for life and work. Work-based learning is offered in engineering, construction, hairdressing, hospitality and catering, and business and administration. Vocational courses are provided for increasing numbers of 14-16 year olds from local schools. The college has Train to Gain and European Social Fund (ESF) co-financed provision. Higher education courses, currently offered in collaboration with the University of East Anglia, will form part of University Campus Suffolk from September 2007.
3. The college works with other local colleges in three collaborative CoVEs in Care, Construction and Skills for Energy. The college's Maritime Centre attracts international students. The Astral Centre and CoVE in Offshore Technology run a range of commercial and certificated courses for industry.
4. In 2005/06, 1,138 learners aged 16-18 and 2,821 adults attended the college's FE courses. Some 44% of enrolments were at level 1, 34% at level 2, and 18% at level 3. Three quarters of the college's full-time students were aged 16-18. Some 3% of the college's students were from minority ethnic communities and 14% of learners declared a learning difficulty or disability.
5. The mission of the college is "to work in partnership to deliver high quality education and training to enable individuals to gain the skills and qualifications to contribute to a successful economy".

## Scope of the inspection

6. 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
- specialist provision in: health, social care and child development; engineering and manufacturing technologies; building and construction; leisure, travel and tourism; and foundations for learning and life.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Good: grade 2
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Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Leadership and management	Good: grade 2
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*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, social care and child development	Good: grade 2
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Engineering and manufacturing technologies	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Building and construction	Satisfactory: grade 3
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Leisure, travel and tourism	Good: grade 2
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Foundations for learning and life	Satisfactory: grade 3
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## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

7. Lowestoft College provides a satisfactory standard of education and training overall. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for 16-18 year olds are good at level 1 and satisfactory at levels 2 and 3. Adult success rates have shown underperformance at level 1, are satisfactory at level 2, and good at level 3. Framework success rates on work-based learning programmes are good.
8. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The development of learners' practical skills is particularly effective in many courses. However, in some sessions, there is insufficient variety in teaching strategies to meet the needs of all learners. Information and learning technology (ILT) is used with variable effectiveness across the college. Assessment and feedback to learners is generally satisfactory.
9. The college meets the needs and interests of learners well. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is good. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of the community. A wide range of productive partnerships supports capacity building in the locality and widens participation in learning. Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or difficulties is good. Additional support for learners is effective. However, the college's Skills for Life strategy is inconsistently implemented in curriculum areas. The college is responsive to the needs of employers.
10. Learners receive good guidance and support. Induction is good and the college provides a comprehensive range of specialist support. Careers guidance is good and tutorials provide good pastoral support. Some individual learning plans are ineffective where actions are insufficiently well defined to secure improvement.
11. Leadership and management are good. The college has a clear strategic direction. Operational planning is thorough and communication is very good. Governors monitor the performance of the college well. Opportunities for staff development are extensive. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Quality assurance systems have been refined and are effective in raising standards. The use of data has improved although insufficient use is made of data on learners' prior attainment to set targets and measure progress. Financial and risk management are good. There has been significant investment in new accommodation. Self-assessment is thorough and accurate.

## Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

12. Inspectors agree with the college that its capacity to improve is good. Leadership and management are good and provide a clear strategic direction. Measures to improve the quality of provision have been effective and overall success rates have improved. Management restructuring and the devolving of some management responsibilities have been successful in raising levels of accountability. Performance monitoring is robust. Effective action is taken to improve unsatisfactory teaching although action planning arising from other internal observations is more variable in quality. Staff development is well focused on quality improvement. The annual self-assessment process is well established and inclusive. The self-assessment report is thorough and accurately identifies most of the college's main strengths and areas for improvement.

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

13. The college has maintained the strengths identified in its last inspection and made good progress in addressing most areas for improvement. Overall success rates have improved. Success rates in work-based learning have improved significantly. There has been some progress in the provision of key skills and Skills for Life but this remains an area for improvement. Good progress has been made in improving accommodation. Opportunities for learners to gain work experience have improved. Curriculum management is satisfactory or better across the college. The rigour of quality assurance procedures has improved.

## Key strengths of the college

### *Strengths*

- success rates for 16-18 year olds at level 1
- success rates for adults at level 3
- productive links with employers and community partners
- inclusive culture and the good support for learners
- good leadership and management
- good governance.



## Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- success rates for adults at level 1
- the integration of the skills for life strategy in all curriculum areas
- the variety in teaching strategies to meet the needs of all learners
- the setting and monitoring of targets which challenge learners and promote improvement
- the more systematic use of data on learners' prior attainment to measure progress.

## Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

*Contributory grades:*

*Work-based learning*

*Good: grade 2*

14. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. During the three year period 2004 to 2006, the overall success rate for all college learners enrolled on long courses has risen to the national average. The rate of improvement in the performance of 16-18 year olds has been more marked than that of adults. Success rates on short courses are at the national averages for both age groups. Framework completion rates by work-based learners are good and well above the national average. The college's self-assessment report presents an accurate assessment of trends in learner performance.
15. Success rates on long courses for 16-18 year olds have significantly improved to well above the national average at level 1 and improved to the national average at level 3. Success rates on long courses at level 2 slightly declined but remained above the national average in 2006. Success rates for males at level 3, although improved, remained below the national average. Success rates in key skills have improved during this period but too few learners are gaining key skills qualifications.
16. Success rates for adults were well below the national average at level 1 in 2006. The college has identified underperformance on some community-based modular programmes in information technology (IT) as a significant contributory factor, and this provision has been discontinued. Success rates at level 2 have remained around the national average. The success rate at level 3 has shown marked improvement and was well above the national average in 2006. Success rates on national vocational qualifications (NVQs) are particularly good.
17. The overall success rate for framework completion by work-based learners on apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are both well above national averages. Although timely framework completion success rates have also improved, too few apprentices complete their framework in the timescales set for them. Learners on Train to Gain and ESF co-financed programmes are making satisfactory progress towards the completion of qualifications. The standard of their portfolio work is good.
18. The achievement of personal goals by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The achievement of 14-16 year olds attending the college's vocational taster programme and their progression to further study is also good.
19. Overall, learners enjoy their classes and are well motivated. They make good progress in developing practical skills on most vocational programmes.

Learners' understanding of health and safety is promoted well. Attendance is good and punctuality is generally satisfactory. The college does not comprehensively monitor learners' destinations after completing their courses, but progression to employment is good in some areas and internal progression within the college is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

20. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Inspectors agree with the college's own evaluation. Standards have improved since the last inspection and there has been a reduction in inadequate teaching. The college's observation system is comprehensive. When lessons are judged unsatisfactory, teachers are provided with good support from the college's teaching and learning team. However, in some satisfactory or better lessons, the quality of action planning arising from observation is not consistent and timescales for improvement are not set. In joint observations and in the evaluation of internal observation reports in curriculum areas, inspectors found that some grading was over generous.
21. The development of learners' skills in practical sessions is particularly effective. The best sessions are well planned to develop all learners to their full potential. Teachers' subject knowledge is used well and theory is effectively linked to working contexts. However, a significant proportion of lessons remain no better than satisfactory. In some cases, these sessions fail to challenge all learners and address the needs of the most talented and less able, fully. There is an over reliance on whole class teaching and some group work is ineffectively managed to ensure all learners are appropriately engaged. Learner feedback on teaching, training and learning from questionnaires is positive, although less so when asked to comment on whether sessions are challenging and hold their interest. Literacy and numeracy are not sufficiently integrated in vocational lessons or signposted to key skills qualifications.
22. Improvements have been made in the provision of information and learning technology. Although some good examples were seen, ILT is not used consistently well across the college to enliven and extend learning. The use of the college's on-line learning platform is underdeveloped.
23. The identification of, and provision for, additional learning support needs is good. Full-time learners are screened at interview or during induction and an assessment of need is completed to identify the most appropriate type of support. Support is provided promptly and its effectiveness is reviewed regularly. There is a high take up of support and learners who receive it are mostly successful in achieving their qualifications.
24. Assessment and feedback are satisfactory. The marking and assessment of learners' work is regular and grading is accurate. Some learners receive thorough and helpful feedback; however, in other cases, feedback is too general and does not give a clear indication of what learners need to do to

- improve. Assessment records are well maintained and an increasing number are displayed in classes to motivate learners to progress. Parents and employers are well informed about learners' progress.
25. Inspectors agree with the college's assessment that its response to learners' needs and interests is good. The college provides a wide range of programmes with good progression routes in most areas. Gaps at particular levels exist on travel and tourism, sports studies and construction programmes. The college is an active member of local provider networks and responds well to the changing needs of the wider community. It takes positive action to promote further education opportunities for learners who would not otherwise continue in education and training. The college successfully pursues different funding streams to support training in different contexts, such as ESF funded programmes and Train to Gain.
  26. Links with schools in Lowestoft and the surrounding rural area are well established. The college has good links with many local employers, many of which have been developed through successful local market intelligence gathered by the college's Business Development Unit. Short courses for employers are popular. The college has recognised that employers are insufficiently involved in the design, delivery and assessment of the curriculum.
  27. A full and varied enrichment programme is provided for most 16-18 learners. Learners enjoy and benefit from the programme, much of which is linked to their particular vocational needs. Arrangements for work placements are managed well. Learners participate in meetings of the college's governing body, academic board and other groups. The college has good arrangements to ensure that the learner's voice is heard.
  28. Inspectors agree with the college that guidance and support for learners are good. The college's "Recruitment with Integrity" policy underpins the organisation's commitment at all levels to ensure learners enrol on appropriate courses. Induction is thorough and effective. Well devised strategies, including the use of attendance officers, have improved learners' attendance on most courses. Poor behaviour and attitudes are dealt with promptly and effectively.
  29. The college's careers and education guidance service is good and further help is provided by Connexions Suffolk. The college provides a good range of specialist support to help learners with assistance from external agencies. The college is sensitive to equality and cultural diversity issues and actively promotes good practice through tutorials and awareness raising events. Full-time learners receive good pastoral support through tutorials. Learners have individual learning plans but in a number of cases these are insufficiently developed. Action plans lack clear and precise targets and are not being used in all cases to raise achievement. A mentoring for achievement initiative is being piloted on some courses at level 2.

## Leadership and management

Good: grade 2

30. Leadership and management are good. Strategic planning is well aligned to the provision of vocational learning to support local and regional economic and social priorities. Operational planning and monitoring is thorough and objectives are realistic. Management has improved through restructuring and staff value the ongoing process of devolving appropriate responsibilities. Communication is very good.
31. Governance is good. Governors carefully monitor performance and contribute positively to college life. Governors have a good understanding of the need to set increasingly ambitious targets for success and they welcome the college's efforts to increase the range of sources for funding to ensure long-term financial stability.
32. Most areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed and strengths maintained. Overall success rates have increased and the quality of the learners' experience is improved. Action has been taken where courses are underperforming. The use of data continues to improve and closely informs the increasingly rigorous performance culture across the college. The college has yet to make systematic use of data on learners' prior attainment to inform target setting and to measure progress. Curriculum management varies from good to satisfactory. The Skills for Life strategy is insufficiently integrated in curriculum areas.
33. Quality assurance systems have been refined and effectively support continuous improvement. Evaluation of performance at course level is regular and systematic. The self-assessment process is inclusive, well established and generally accurate. Service level agreements for work-based learning, Train to Gain and co-financed provision provide clear arrangements for managing quality and ensuring good health and safety in the workplace.
34. Staff are well supported and benefit from extensive opportunities for development. They gain valuable knowledge about sector priorities alongside individual professional development and a good range of industrial updating opportunities. Arrangements for staff appraisal have been recently revised but it is too early to assess the impact of the new system on performance.
35. Equality and diversity are central to the college's core values and are promoted well. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the performance of different groups of learners at course level. Equality and diversity practices are insufficiently developed in work-based learning. The college's response to the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 is good. Child protection procedures are good and staff and governors have received specific training to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people.

36. The college provides good value for money. Financial and risk management is good and resources are deployed effectively. Most staff are either qualified as teachers or undertaking qualifications. The college provides a welcoming and safe working environment. Significant investment has been made in new accommodation and further improvements continue to be planned.

## Curriculum area inspections

Health, social care and child development

Good: grade 2

### Context

37. The college offers full-time and part-time courses in health, care, and early years from levels 1 to 3. There are 193 learners aged 16-18 and 51 adults studying full-time and a further 177, mostly adults, study part-time. Learners are evenly divided between programmes in care and in early years. A wide range of courses in holistic therapies at levels 2 and 3 are attended by 159 learners, most of whom are adults. The area has a joint CoVE in Care and Childcare in partnership with two other Suffolk colleges.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high success rates on holistic therapies and most care programmes
- well planned teaching to meet individual learners' needs
- strong links with external agencies lead to high progression
- good curriculum management.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low success on the NVQ early years care and education.

### Achievements and standards

38. Achievements and standards are good overall. Success rates are consistently high on programmes in complementary therapies. Success rates are high on the NVQ care programmes at levels 2 and 3 and the BTEC First Diploma in caring. Learners on GCE health and social care and BTEC First Diploma in caring achieve well above predicted grades. Success rates on most early years programmes are improving and are around the national average. However, success is low on the NVQ early years care and education at levels 2 and 3. There is very good progression to further study or relevant employment on all courses.

39. Learners make good progress and the standard of work is generally high. They develop a good range of relevant practical skills and knowledge and demonstrate appropriate behaviour for professional practice in a variety of work settings.

### Quality of provision

40. Teaching and learning are good. In most cases, initial assessment and knowledge of learners is used well to plan a range of appropriate activities. In the best lessons, learners enthusiastically engage in a variety of innovative

tasks, drawing well on their life, work or placement experience and teachers check learning regularly. In a few lessons, there is insufficient challenge to extend all learners. Assessments are vocationally relevant, set and marked at an appropriate level.

41. The range of provision is good, including opportunities to progress to study at level 4. A comprehensive range of additional vocationally relevant qualifications enhances career prospects. Strong links with a range of external agencies including universities, statutory and voluntary organisations, broaden learning opportunities. Good links with partner colleges in the CoVE for care and child care provide specific short courses to meet the needs of the vocational area.
42. Support for learners is good. The interview process is thorough and a comprehensive induction programme provides further opportunities for learners to confirm the appropriateness of the choice of programme. Targets set during tutorials are closely monitored by tutors.

### Leadership and management

43. Leadership and management are good. Individual learner and group progress are closely monitored. Well defined actions arise from course reviews. Lesson observations are used well to inform staff training and development. Resources to support teaching and learning are good. Well equipped salons and two realistic work environments enhance learning. However, there are few digital projectors available in teaching rooms. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Staff actively engage in opportunities to maintain their vocational experience and update their knowledge. The self-assessment report evaluates the provision accurately.



## Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

44. The provision comprises craft courses in welding and fabrication, engineering, motor vehicle and yacht and boat building. There are 144 learners aged 16-18, mostly studying full-time, and 114 adult learners, mostly studying part-time. In addition, there are 55 work-based learners on apprenticeships and a further 14 on advanced apprenticeships. The college offers a taster programme in motor vehicle and engineering courses to 14-16 year olds from local schools.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high success rates in work-based learning apprenticeships
- strong employer links
- good resources for teaching and learning in most areas
- effective management action to secure improvement.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low success rates on level 2 courses
- insufficient differentiation in theory classes
- insufficiently specific target setting.

### Achievements and standards

45. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for most full-time courses are satisfactory at level 1 and have improving trends. Success rates on some level 2 courses remain below national averages, such as in performing engineering operations and the certificate in vehicle maintenance. The success rate for work-based learners on apprenticeships is high at 82% compared to the national average of 49%, and on advanced apprenticeships at 67% compared to the national average of 51%.
46. Learners on yacht and boat building, welding and fabrication courses produce practical work of a high standard. Learners develop a good range of skills in lessons. Apprentices develop good workplace skills in a wide range of work placements. Employers value the contribution these learners make to their business and after an initial training period, many learners are given responsibility and encouraged to work on their own projects. For example, one engineering learner was observed working on complex electronic equipment used in military applications, and another was observed cutting thread to a precision drill used in the off-shore oil industry. Learners at college and in the workplace have a good understanding of health and safety.

## Quality of provision

47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned and use a satisfactory range of teaching methods to consolidate and extend learning. Learners' individual learning needs are generally met well in practical lessons, but are less effectively addressed in theory lessons. ILT is used effectively in some theory lessons, but it is not used well to develop independent learning. Some feedback on learners' written work is insufficiently detailed. Employers are well informed about the progress of apprentices and good use is made of on-line learner tracking software.
48. The programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well. There is a good range of provision with recent initiatives to recruit female learners. Links with employers are strong. The CoVEs in Skills for Energy and Offshore Technology provide very good support for local employers.
49. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Tutorials are well planned and scheduled appropriately. However, targets set to improve performance are often insufficiently focused and do not identify clearly what learners need to do to improve.

## Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent management actions have been effective in rectifying significant weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The learning environment is particularly well resourced in welding and fabrication, motor vehicle and electronic process maintenance. There is some weak promotion of equality of opportunity to work-based learners. Self-assessment is accurate and focuses well on areas identified for improvement.

## Building and construction

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

51. The college provides full-time and part-time courses in construction at levels 1 to 3. Craft qualifications are offered in bricklaying, wood occupations, painting and decorating, electrical installation and plumbing. There are 297 learners enrolled on full-time and part-time courses. Approximately half are aged 16-18, mostly studying full-time. Some 60 work-based learners are on apprenticeship programmes and a further 66 are on advanced apprenticeship programmes. There are 48 school pupils aged 14-16 attending a taster programme.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high apprenticeship framework success rate
- good resources for learning
- good support for learners.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- low success rates in electrical installation
- limited curriculum offer and opportunities for enrichment
- insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching and learning.

### Achievements and standards

52. Success rates on most craft courses are satisfactory. Brickwork and wood occupations construction awards are above a low national average. Success rates on electrical installation courses are poor at 38%. Key skills success is low across all crafts. Most learners work well in practical lessons producing good work. Brickwork construction award learners at level 2 produce industry standard work well before the end of their programme. Health and safety is a priority for all learners who work well to a rota as workshop supervisors.
53. Framework success by work-based learners is high on apprenticeship programmes at 85%, but low on advanced apprenticeships at 42%. Work-based learners develop good workplace skills in a wide range of placements.

### Quality of provision

54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some good classes in wood occupations make imaginative use of interactive whiteboards, engaging learners through relevant directed questions. However, this good practice is not shared across the other areas, particularly in theory classes. Other sessions are too teacher dominated with insufficient learner engagement and infrequent checks on learning. Assessment is satisfactory and learners receive constructive feedback. Learners' progress is tracked in each of the crafts and displayed on workshop walls. Internal verification is well planned. The monitoring of work-based

learners' progress is satisfactory. However, some targets set are too general and insufficiently focused.

55. The range of provision is limited. Most learners enrol on programmes at level 2. There are few opportunities to progress to level 3 and no level 4 programmes. The range of short course provision and evening classes is narrow. However, the college runs a popular taster programme for 14-16 year olds. Enrichment activities and opportunities to gain additional qualifications are limited. Liaison with local employers is insufficiently developed.
56. Learner support is particularly good for both college and work-based learners. Initial and diagnostic assessment is effective in identifying learners' support needs. An initiative 'mentoring for achievement' is effective in targeting learners at risk with confidential support and guidance. In addition, tutors, technicians and support staff within each area give good personal support alongside vocational advice.

#### Leadership and management

57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Annual staff appraisals are linked to lesson observations and course reviews. Staff are appropriately experienced and a number have recently updated their skills in industry. Departmental meetings are held regularly, but some course teams meet too infrequently. There are good resources for learning, with new purpose-built workshops and classrooms for every trade. Workshops are spacious and well equipped and all classrooms have interactive whiteboards. Course reviews are used well to inform the self-assessment process and the development plan. The self-assessment report accurately identified key areas for development.

## Leisure, travel and tourism

Good: grade 2

### Context

58. The college offers a range of courses in sport and travel from levels 1 to 3 in sport and levels 2 to 3 in travel. At the time of inspection, 17 learners aged mainly 16-18 study full-time and 17 learners study part-time sport courses. In travel, 55 learners aged mainly 16-18, study full-time and 10 learners study part-time courses. There are 24 learners aged 14-16 studying GCSE leisure and tourism.

### *STRENGTHS*

- high success rates on sport, and pass rates on travel courses
- good teaching and learning
- good support for learners with effective target setting for achievement
- highly effective curriculum leadership and management.

### *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- insufficient focus on strategies to engage least confident students
- limited progression opportunities.

### Achievements and standards

59. Achievements and standards are good. Success rates on sports courses are high and well above national averages. Pass rates on travel courses are good. Retention on levels 2 and 3 travel courses has been low. However, the retention of learners currently on these programmes has improved.
60. The acquisition of practical and work related skills is particularly effective. Learners in travel and tourism have achieved many awards, including a City and Guilds gold medal of excellence. Sports learners demonstrate a professional approach in the practical environment where they regularly run sport sessions for less able learners. Portfolios and course files are well presented and are of a good standard demonstrating effective use of ICT.

### Quality of provision

61. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well structured and learning materials are of high quality. Good use of ILT is made in travel courses. The best sessions feature frequent checks on individual learning using activities such as quizzes, completion of case studies and peer review. In less successful sessions, there is insufficient focus on strategies to engage less able or confident learners. Generalised questioning strategies and ineffective management of group work result in poor engagement of some learners. Tracking systems are comprehensive and feedback on assessed work gives clear direction on how improvements can be made.

62. Programmes are satisfactorily matched to learners' needs and interests. However, there are limited progression opportunities with no full-time courses in travel at level 1 or for sport at level 3. There is low recruitment on sport and some level 2 travel courses. Vocationally relevant enrichment and links with employers are good.
63. Support for learners is good. Tutors are effective in action planning and target setting for achievement. Additional learning support is particularly effective in enabling learners to participate in their programme. Career development is satisfactory. Travel students complete a career plan and all learners have completed a CV. However, some full-time learners were insufficiently aware of progression opportunities such as gaining access to a university.

#### Leadership and management

64. Leadership and management are good. Strategies to improve underperforming courses are effective. Good use is made of data to monitor provision and learners' progress. There has been effective support for staff to improve teaching practice. Access to vocationally relevant industry resources is good and staff are well qualified. The intranet for learners is underdeveloped. The self-assessment report is largely accurate although the internal grading of lessons was found to be over generous.

Foundations for learning and life

Satisfactory: grade 3

## Context

65. The provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the preparation for work programmes offer opportunities at pre-entry, entry and level 1. There are currently 164 learners enrolled on these full-time courses at the main Lowestoft site. There are approximately 800 full-time 16-18 year olds taking skills for life and key skills qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Part-time English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and literacy and numeracy courses for adults, are taught at employers' premises, in the community and at the Kirkley Centre. There are approximately 100 learners enrolled on these programmes.

## *STRENGTHS*

- good achievement on discrete provision for learning difficulties and/or disabilities and preparation for work programmes
- much good teaching on learning difficulties and/or disabilities provision and preparation for work programmes
- responsive curriculum and effective support to meet the needs of learners
- good management of learning difficulties and/or disabilities provision and preparation for work programmes.

## *AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT*

- ineffective management of learning in some lessons
- inconsistent integration of Skills for Life into vocational areas
- insufficient access to ICT.

## Achievements and standards

66. Achievements and standards are satisfactory overall. Achievement on discrete learning difficulties and/or disabilities provision and preparation for work programmes is good. Learners develop good personal skills which are reflected in their confidence and work ethic. Progression rates are good both to higher level courses and to supported and open employment.
67. Overall success rates on literacy and numeracy courses are satisfactory. Key skills success rates have improved since the previous inspection. However, considerable variation exists across curriculum areas and insufficient numbers of full-time learners achieve skills for life and key skills qualifications. Pass rates on ESOL courses are low.

## Quality of provision

68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching on discrete learning difficulties and/or disabilities provision and preparation for work programmes is

good. In many sessions, multi-sensory approaches, activities and resources are used well. Short focused tasks which change regularly, add pace to sessions. End of session reviews encourage learners to identify their own learning and in-session achievement, and success is celebrated well.

69. In key skills, the better lessons are well planned and keep learners interested and challenged. However, in less effective lessons, the more able learners are not given sufficiently demanding activities and in some cases little learning takes place. The management of learning in some ESOL and literacy and numeracy programmes in vocational areas does not meet the needs of learners. Planning is not clearly based on their assessed needs and targets are insufficiently clear to enable progress to be measured. In some sessions, the teaching is insufficiently differentiated and engaging.
70. There is a good range of provision offered to learners who have not succeeded at school. Courses are well planned and provide a variety of progression routes for students. There are good work placement opportunities for learners on preparation for work programmes. Programmes are closely aligned to entry opportunities in the local employment market.
71. Guidance and support for learners are good. The college systematically identifies learners' additional support needs at the start of their courses. Skilled and experienced learning support staff are deployed effectively.

#### Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The learning difficulties and/or disabilities provision and the preparation for work programmes are managed well. Managers have worked successfully with support from the senior management team to improve the provision in these areas since the previous inspection. Teaching staff are well qualified. There is little use of ILT on preparing for work programmes. The provision of adaptive IT is insufficient to meet the needs of all learners. There is inconsistent integration of Skills for Life within vocational areas. The management of key skills is not sufficiently coherent across the college. Course teams currently decide which key skills their learners will take but there is no clear rationale to inform this process. Overall, the self-assessment report is broadly accurate although some weaknesses identified during inspection were not recognised.



## Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, 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	03/04	655	57	60	-3	594	57	59	-2
	04/05	742	64	64	0	1,276	43	62	-19
	05/06	588	75			1,256	46		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04								
	04/05								
	05/06								
NVQs	03/04	58	73	61	12	35	83	62	21
	04/05	111	79	67	12	32	88	67	21
	05/06	80	83			21	90		
Other	03/04	597	56	60	-4	599	55	59	-4
	04/05	631	61	64	-3	1,244	41	61	-20
	05/06	508	74			1,235	45		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, 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	03/04	721	56	56	0	567	56	54	2
	04/05	582	68	61	7	538	64	60	4
	05/06	580	65			664	61		
GCSEs	03/04	57	47	61	-14	109	57	59	-2
	04/05	49	49	64	-15	98	55	62	-7
	05/06	53	58			76	58		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	55	78	63	15	5	60	57	3
	04/05	42	81	67	14	6	83	70	13
	05/06	26	88			5	80		
NVQs	03/04	134	44	52	-8	154	46	54	-8
	04/05	98	65	57	8	63	48	60	-12
	05/06	140	75			134	64		
Other	03/04	475	58	54	4	299	61	53	8
	04/05	393	70	60	10	371	69	59	10
	05/06	361	60			449	60		

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, 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	03/04	374	57	64	-7	529	55	54	1
	04/05	334	63	68	-5	534	66	57	9
	05/06	202	68			468	71		
A/A2 Levels	03/04					7	57	66	-9
	04/05								
	05/06								
AS Levels	03/04	21	10	63	-53	30	40	50	-10
	04/05	14	36	66	-30	23	35	52	-17
	05/06	8	50			19	26		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	52	77	52	25	49	12	44	-32
	04/05	72	64	60	4	33	58	53	5
	05/06	38	74			14	64		
NVQs	03/04	31	58	54	4	68	25	47	-22
	04/05	41	42	62	-20	55	73	54	19
	05/06	15	67			66	68		
Other	03/04	269	57	56	1	375	67	56	11
	04/05	207	69	60	9	423	68	58	10
	05/06	141	67			369	74		

Table 4

Success rates on work-based learning programmes managed by the college 2003/04 to 2005/06.

a) Overall success rate

End Year	Apprenticeship Programme	Number of Learners *	College Framework rate **	National rate **	College NVQ rate **	National rate **
2003/04	Apprenticeship	31	58	32	74	47
	Advanced	24	46	31	50	48
2004/05	Apprenticeship	30	67	38	67	50
	Advanced	25	64	34	68	48
2005/06	Apprenticeship	43	72	53	77	58
	Advanced	45	71	44	76	54

\* 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	16	13	16	31	24
	Advanced	17	12	19	2	30
2004/05	Apprenticeship	44	5	22	5	29
	Advanced	27	48	21	52	31
2005/06	Apprenticeship	18	22	33	33	38
	Advanced	47	38	27	43	34

\* 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'