

# South Essex College of Further and Higher Education

General further education college

<b>Inspection dates</b>		<b>11–15 May 2015</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement-3</b>
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

## Summary of key findings for learners

### This college requires improvement because:

- the proportion of learners that successfully complete their qualifications is too low over time
- too much teaching, learning and assessment still requires improvement; not enough teachers plan learning that meets the needs of all their learners nor provide enough challenge to enable all learners, particularly the more able, to make the progress of which they are capable
- over use of teacher-led activities in too many lessons slows learners' progress; too many learners over-rely on teachers' directions and fail to develop higher order thinking skills and deepen their understanding sufficiently
- attendance and punctuality require urgent improvement; too many learners are absent, late for lessons or leave early, disrupting the learning of others
- in too many subjects, teachers do not routinely develop learners' English and mathematics skills sufficiently
- the majority of teachers do not plan opportunities that develop learners and apprentices' understanding of equality and the needs of diverse groups in modern Britain
- not enough learners benefit from relevant work experience to improve their work-related skills.

### This college has the following strengths:

- senior leaders ensure managers have a good understanding of the areas that require improvement and as a result, more learners are staying in learning than in previous years
- the Principal and recently restructured management team provide strong leadership and are raising standards in teaching, learning and assessment through effective management of staff performance and weaker teaching
- the proportion of apprentices studying on subcontractors' provision that successfully complete their qualifications and within the planned timescale is high.

## Full report

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

- Improve the standard of teaching, learning and assessment so that learners on vocational and A-level programmes make good progress, achieve their qualifications and improve their chances of progressing to higher-level study or purposeful employment.
- Ensure that all teachers have high expectations of their learners and tailor activities to meet their individual needs, particularly the more able, so that they receive effective challenge and inspiration to make good progress and achieve their full potential.
- Ensure all teachers provide good opportunities for learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding independently in lessons without relying on direction from teachers.
- Improve attendance levels and urgently eliminate the disruption to lessons caused by poor punctuality, by teachers setting high expectations on attendance and punctuality with all learners and taking prompt action to support and challenge those whose attendance and punctuality is not good.
- Raise the standard of how all teachers promote English and mathematics within teaching, learning and assessment to ensure all learners develop these essential skills.
- Ensure teachers plan and use opportunities during learning consistently to raise learners and apprentices' understanding of equality and the needs of diverse groups
- Ensure all learners on study programmes improve their work-related skills through meaningful work experience.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Requires improvement
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- The college provides classroom-based learning for study programmes and courses for adults in all subject areas. Around two thirds of learners are aged 16 to 18 and most take up full-time study programmes. The majority of younger learners are studying vocational courses at level 3, with just under a tenth on AS- and A-level courses. Around 1,750 apprentices were enrolled at the time of inspection.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of learners who complete their classroom-based courses successfully has increased, but success rates remain below the national rates and require improvement. Success rates are low in most subject areas. Leaders in-year data indicate that more learners are on target to succeed than in previous years and to around the overall national rate.
- Not enough learners studying vocational courses succeed. Learners aged 16 to 18 studying vocational programmes at level 3 make less progress relative to their starting points than nationally. A significant proportion of younger learners on A-level programmes do not make the progress of which they are capable. In particular, pass rates have declined over time on AS-level courses and too few learners complete their courses successfully. Too few learners who take A-level programmes achieve higher grades. Not enough learners continue from their AS-level study to complete A-levels.
- Outcomes for the majority of apprentices studying programmes on subcontractors' provision have improved since the previous inspection and they are now good. The proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeship programmes and within the planned timescale has increased; apprenticeship outcomes are now above the national rates. Adult apprentices at all levels are more successful compared with their younger peers. The success

rate of apprentices aged 16 to 18 on intermediate programmes is above the national rate, but below at advanced level. The success rates for apprenticeships which the college directly provides are low; however, more apprentices on this provision have completed their programme in the current year and the college's in-year data indicate that a far greater proportion of apprentices are on target to succeed than in previous years.

- Managers' actions to increase the number of learners who stay in learning have led to a marked improvement in the percentage of younger learners remaining on their courses. However, the proportion of adults who leave their courses early is higher than nationally and has risen over time. The college's in-year data indicate that the overall proportion of learners remaining on their courses has improved to around the national rate.
- Attendance is improving on previous years, but remains below leaders' targets. Taking the examination period into account, the level of attendance was still low and too many learners were late to lessons or left early during the inspection week.
- The standards of learners' work and the development of their academic and practical skills across the subject areas vary too much. For example, learners on computing courses research and create carefully planned project specifications adapted to meet differing commercial environments effectively, but in too many subjects, learners do not make the progress they are capable of because the work they receive from staff does not challenge them sufficiently.
- Achievement gaps between groups of learners are relatively few. However, learners of all ages with learning difficulties and/or disabilities perform less well compared with their peers on classroom-based courses. Leaders have put in place a series of actions with additional resources to rectify this issue and the gap is narrowing, but remains too wide. Care leavers and those with experience of local authority care do not attend or stay in learning as well as their peers.
- In 2013/14, the proportion of the small number of learners studying GCSE mathematics who achieved an A\*-C grade was significantly higher than the national rate but lower in English. Not enough learners of any age achieve their qualifications in functional skills English and mathematics over time.
- The majority of younger learners take up meaningful and relevant work experience. However, around a quarter do not have the opportunity to develop their employment-related skills through work experience. Managers have recently introduced a supported employment internships programme for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to help a small but growing number of learners with high needs take up valuable work placements.
- Leaders have secure data on the progression and destination of the large majority of leavers; around a tenth of destinations remain unknown. Most learners, whose destination staff know, progress to further learning or employment. Learners' progression to higher levels of study within the college has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Around three quarters of learners who apply for places to higher education progress successfully.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not yet good enough to improve outcomes for all learners and the proportion of teaching, learning and assessment that requires improvement is too high. In the current year, leaders have established new job roles, new policies and processes and launched initiatives such as the 'GEMS' English and mathematics campaign in order to raise the quality of teachers' practice and improve learners and apprentices' outcomes. As a result, a strengthened team of teachers is in place and more learners are staying in learning than in previous years. Teachers' records of progress indicate that more learners are likely to achieve their qualifications than in the past three years.
- The majority of teachers' practice enables learners to make good progress. Where teaching, learning and assessment are effective, teachers use their experience and expertise to create

purposeful activities that interest and motivate learners to succeed. Teachers make good use of resources to stimulate learners' enthusiasm and continually reference learning to industry standards and job requirements. Teachers make good use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to support learning outside lessons. Teachers' precise explanation and skilful use of probing questioning accelerate learners' knowledge and skills development. For example, learners on a course at level 3 in computer games development were adeptly challenged by their teacher to identify and eliminate a variety of electronic 'bugs' that prevented computer games from functioning properly. The teacher encouraged learners to appraise each other's work and these contributions further developed their knowledge and understanding.

- Too many teachers do not demonstrate high enough expectations of their learners and plan teaching, learning and assessment that meet the needs of all their learners sufficiently well. Too often, teachers expect learners of varying levels of ability to work on the same tasks; as a result, more able learners finish early and often do not receive sufficient challenge to extend their learning. In too many lessons, teachers do not provide enough additional challenge to improve learners' progress and promote their achievement of higher grades.
- Weaker teaching has too much teacher-led activity that limits learners' opportunities to solve problems or for them to deduce answers independently. Consequently, too many learners over-rely on teachers' direction and fail to develop their high-order thinking skills and deepen their understanding sufficiently. Teachers do not use questioning sufficiently well to check on learners' understanding and ensure subsequent teaching and learning consolidates learners' knowledge and skills.
- Attendance and punctuality require urgent improvement. Too many learners are absent or late for lessons. Teaching and learning in lessons are disrupted by learners arriving late or leaving early and as a result, a significant minority of teachers do not provide a sufficiently challenging start that meets the needs of all learners or ensure lessons end with an effective summary of the learning that has taken place.
- The large majority of learners on vocational courses benefit from well-maintained equipment and resources that operate to industry standards. Managers use the college's strong links with employers to ensure the majority of learners on study programmes benefit from purposeful work experience. Leaders have contracted with a private company who provide relevant employability training to a significant number of learners.
- Most teachers assess the starting points of learners effectively and use individual learning plans well to set and monitor challenging targets with learners. In the majority of subjects, regular individual reviews of progress encourage most learners to work hard and make progress.
- The large majority of support staff provide good support and challenge with learners and apprentices who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and enable them to participate fully in learning and progress well in their studies. For example, due to the high level of support to help a learner with complex needs on an art and design course at level 2 research his ideas, he was able to design and build a model to represent his view of power and effect. However, in a few lessons, teachers use this additional support less effectively.
- The majority of teachers use assessment well to measure learners' progress and incentivise learners to improve their work and achieve. However, a minority of teachers' written feedback on learners' work lacks sufficient information to enable learners to improve or is limited to meeting the minimum requirements to achieve the qualification.
- Assessment of the majority of apprentices in the workplace is good. Assessors have high levels of industry knowledge and most use questioning skilfully to draw out apprentices' reflection on tasks completed and how they might improve further. Consequently, the majority of apprentices develop good vocational skills and produce work of a high standard.
- Not enough teachers develop learners' English skills sufficiently. Where effective, teachers develop learners' English skills adeptly in the context of the subject they are learning. The majority of learners are confident with their spoken English. However, too many teachers do not help learners to improve their reading and writing skills effectively.

- The development of learners' mathematics skills requires improvement. In technical subjects, learners develop these skills well. For example, in one lesson, learners on a brickwork course at level 3 calculated the radius of a curved wall successfully and built complex decorative walls accurately to within small tolerances. However, too many teachers do not plan opportunities to explore mathematical concepts or promote the value of this essential skill to learners' career aspirations.
- As part of leaders' revised policy to maximise all learners' progression opportunities, a central team provides learners with well-timed, independent careers advice and teachers offer further information and guidance in their subject sector area to ensure most learners make informed study and career choices.
- Staff provide an inclusive and welcoming learning environment and learners are courteous and respectful towards one another and their teachers. However, the promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Too many teachers do not plan opportunities that develop learners and apprentices' understanding of equality and the needs of diverse groups in modern Britain.

### Early Years and Playwork

**16-19 study programmes**  
**19+ learning programmes**  
**Apprenticeships**

Good

### Teaching, learning and assessment in early years and playwork are good because:

- teachers provide a good level of support to learners and ensure they are fully involved in setting and monitoring challenging targets; as a result the large majority of learners are making good progress
- teachers and assessors use their extensive industry experience to ensure learners make good links between theory and practice and develop a good understanding of the varied needs of children
- teachers provide learners with good verbal and written feedback that helps learners improve their work and make progress
- assessment in the workplace is good; assessors use a wide range of assessment that enables most apprentices to extend their knowledge and skills and value to employers
- teachers use specialist accommodation and equipment effectively to develop learners' practical skills prior to work experience; for example, learners practise bathing, changing and feeding babies and preparing a child-centred play environment
- staff manage work experience well and enable learners to benefit from a wide range of good quality placements that increases their employment-related skills and understanding of work
- teachers and assessors ensure that all learners recognise the importance of keeping children safe successfully; learners are able to demonstrate safe working practices in a wide range of settings where children play and learn.

### Early years and playwork is not yet outstanding because:

- not enough teachers, particularly on courses at level 3, make sufficient use of learners' starting points to plan learning that meets their needs and challenges them to excel

- a small minority of teachers use questioning which is unclear and consequently they do not always know what learners have learnt and understand in order to plan subsequent teaching and learning
- a few teachers do not always enable learners to work out answers or solve problems independently and, as a result, learners do not make as much progress as they are capable of doing
- vocational teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on developing learners' skills in mathematics; they do not always check learners' understanding of mathematics or promote its value in employment in the early years sector.

## Science, mathematics and statistics

16-19 study programmes  
19+ learning programmes

Requires improvement

### Teaching, learning and assessment in science and mathematics require improvement because:

- too many learners do not make sufficient progress over time relative to their starting points; the progression of learners from AS- to A- level courses is too low
- attendance on science and mathematics courses is low and this limits the progress a minority of learners are making
- not enough teachers ensure teaching, learning and assessment meet the needs of all learners and challenge them to excel and achieve higher grades; more able learners who complete tasks and activities are often left waiting for too long without further challenge
- teachers' questioning in practical and theory lessons rarely enables learners to develop higher thinking skills, accelerate their progress or produce higher standards of work
- an overdependence on teacher-led activity in a majority of lessons inhibits the progress learners make; teachers do not always enable learners to solve scientific or mathematical problems independently and often provide solutions and answers too quickly
- not enough teachers plan opportunities to develop learners' English skills; for example, making sure that learners' spelling and punctuation of technical vocabulary are correct and they use it appropriately
- too many learners do not have the opportunity to benefit from work experience or work-related learning to improve their understanding of the value of mathematics or science in the workplace sufficiently
- most teachers do not use learning materials or take opportunities to routinely promote equality and celebrate diversity in lessons.

### Science and mathematics have the following strengths:

- staff track the progress of learners against challenging targets effectively and as a result, more learners are making progress against individual targets and staying in learning than in previous years
- teachers provide clear and helpful written feedback on assessment and enable learners to improve their work successfully
- most learners value and use the college's VLE effectively to improve their learning

- staff provide good support and guidance in helping learners with progression and career choices.

<b>Engineering</b>  <b>16-19 study programmes</b> <b>19+ learning programmes</b> <b>Apprenticeships</b>	Requires improvement
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### **Teaching, learning and assessment in engineering require improvement because:**

- success rates for most classroom-based courses and apprenticeship programmes are below those nationally; the proportion of apprentices who complete their programme within the planned timescale is well below the national rates
- too many learners are absent or late for lessons; as a result the range of knowledge and ability within each group of learners is too wide
- the pace of lessons is often too slow leading to a minority of learners becoming bored and distracted
- in theory lessons teachers do not ensure learners build on their knowledge, or reflect on and develop their own ideas sufficiently
- teachers do not always plan activities to challenge the more able, resulting in these learners making slower than expected progress and not achieving to their full potential
- teachers do not use questioning well, with too much use of non-directed questioning that hinders learners' understanding of the progress they are making
- teachers do not make sufficient use of teaching and learning technology in theory lessons to improve learners' understanding and add interest
- assessors do not link the teaching of health and safety sufficiently to the apprentices' workplace and as a result, their understanding of the issues in this area relevant to their working and learning environments is limited
- too few learners benefit from relevant work experience to prepare them fully for working in the industry, in either a domestic or mixed commercial engineering environment
- teachers and assessors do not promote diversity through their teaching in order to help learners understand the wider diverse needs of those they will encounter in the workplace.

### **Engineering has the following strengths:**

- learners develop good vocational skills in practical sessions to meet the needs of the industry
- learners benefit from a good range of well-maintained equipment and resources to meet curriculum requirements and the development of skills in electrical and engineering sectors
- learners develop strong engineering mathematics and logic to meet industry requirements and improve their problem solving skills
- teachers and assessors' use of assessment is rigorous and accurate with good verbal and written feedback that enables learners to improve their work.

## Hairdressing and beauty therapy

16-19 study programmes  
19+ learning programmes  
Apprenticeships

Good

### Teaching, learning and assessment in hairdressing and beauty therapy are good because:

- the large majority of learners make good progress, develop high standards of practical skills and good work-related, personal and social skills; for example, learners on courses at level 3 communicate well with clients while demonstrating high levels of dexterity when cutting and colouring their hair
- teachers in the large majority of lessons use questioning well to ensure the majority of learners understand how theory underpins their practical skills development
- most classroom-based learners on courses at level 3 develop good employment-related knowledge and skills through purposeful work experience
- most teachers assess learners' work frequently and accurately and provide clear feedback on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve
- the large majority of learners and apprentices benefit from good teachers who are skilled practitioners with current industry experience and who ensure that lessons are interesting and relevant to the hairdressing and beauty therapy sectors
- most teachers integrate English into vocational teaching successfully, helping learners to develop good communication and literacy skills
- teachers make sure learners behave well in lessons and show high levels of respect to each other; they have a well-developed understanding of treating a diverse range of clients' needs from different ethnic backgrounds, genders and age.

### Teaching, learning and assessment in hairdressing and beauty therapy are not outstanding yet because:

- a small minority of teachers do not provide sufficient challenge to ensure all learners make good progress in their studies; teachers do not check and correct a small minority of learners' knowledge on practical techniques such as applying manicures and pedicures effectively
- not enough teachers promote the value of mathematics within the subject area sufficiently; for example, too many learners on courses at level 2 are not able to achieve the angles required for cutting hair through different techniques
- attendance was below leaders' targets during the inspection and too many learners arrive late disrupting the start of lessons and impeding the learning of others
- a few assessors do not conduct enough checks on apprentices on intermediate courses to enable all apprentices to make progress in completing their assessments
- the majority of learners on courses at level 2 do not benefit from work experience placements to help prepare them for employment.

**Sport, leisure and recreation**

**16-19 study programmes**  
**19+ learning programmes**

Good

**Teaching, learning and assessment in sport, leisure and recreation are good because:**

- an increasing and high proportion of learners successfully complete their qualifications over time
- the large majority of teachers use a variety of teaching and learning activities to interest and motivate learners well; for example, in a lesson, learners on the sports analysis course at level 3 used information and learning technologies successfully to develop their understanding of how to use data to calculate sports performance and identify the advantages and limitations of using data in this way
- the large majority of teachers use questioning skilfully to maintain learners' focus on learning, check their understanding, encourage them to develop their reflection and application of their work, and make good gains in knowledge and skills
- most teachers, learning coaches and managers monitor learners' progress well; regular individual reviews of progress inspire most learners to work hard and make good progress against challenging targets
- the large majority of teachers' assessment is both informative and specific and as a result, learners know how they will be assessed and what they need to do to achieve their target grades
- staff provide good impartial information, advice and guidance that enables learners to make informed choices about their next step towards their career aims
- learners value the extensive enrichment programme; visits by employers and guest speakers improve learners' industry knowledge, personal and social development and their understanding of work.

**Teaching, learning and assessment in sport, leisure and recreation are not yet outstanding because:**

- not enough teachers challenge the more able learners sufficiently to develop a greater depth of understanding and knowledge; teachers do not routinely set extension activities or promote learners' use of industry specific terminology sufficiently
- a small minority of teachers do not promote the value of English and mathematics in vocational topics or in the workplace with learners
- attendance was low during the inspection; the college's data indicate that overall attendance in the current year is below the target set by leaders
- a small minority of teachers' written feedback on learners' work lacks sufficient information to enable them to improve; teachers do not always complete post-assessment feedback sheets fully; for example, they give insufficient feedback on the appropriate use of referencing to learners on courses at level 3
- too many teachers do not plan or take opportunities to promote diversity and encourage learners to reflect and respect cultures and lifestyles of others.

**Foundation English**

**16-19 study programmes**  
**19+ learning programmes**

Requires improvement

**Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English require improvement because:**

- the proportion of learners who complete functional skills English qualifications successfully has been below that nationally over time; the college's in-year data indicate that a greater proportion of learners are now achieving their functional skills qualifications in English
- attendance and punctuality require improvement; at inspection attendance was low, with a significant number of learners absent, turning up late for lessons or leaving early and disrupting the learning of others
- too much teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and too many teachers do not plan to meet the needs of all learners sufficiently; as a result, too much teaching is dull and lacks sufficient challenge to interest and motivate all learners
- in a minority of lessons, teachers' questioning fails to check learners' understanding sufficiently; teachers often do not give learners sufficient time to consider questions and answer independently
- an overdependence on teacher-led activity in a majority of lessons slows down the progress learners make; too many learners over-rely on teachers' direction and fail to develop their core English skills sufficiently
- not enough teachers provide sufficient informative written feedback that ensures the less able learners rectify repeated errors in their work and the more able develop their English skills more quickly
- not enough teachers ensure learners self-assess their work regularly and acquire successful methods to improve their reading and writing, and deepen their knowledge and understanding of English
- learners on study programmes do not continue to attend discrete functional skills classes if they achieve their qualification in-year and as a result, this limits the progress they make to develop their skills further

**Foundation English has the following strengths:**

- where teaching, learning and assessment are effective, teachers plan well-structured lessons and use a variety of resources and activities which stimulate learners' interest; for example, in one lesson, learners eagerly took part in a role play and group discussion on what type of features and language they would expect to find in a successful advertisement
- learners who attend regularly have a good understanding of the value of good English skills and how these skills will help them achieve in their vocational studies and future careers
- teachers' promotion of equality and celebration of diversity is good; teachers use resources well to ensure learners often reflect on social diversity, gender, age and ethnicity in their work.

## Administration

**16-19 study programmes**  
**19+ learning programmes**  
**Apprenticeships**

Good

### Teaching, learning and assessment in administration are good because:

- the proportion of younger learners and apprentices who complete their qualifications is high and the majority produce good standards of work
- teachers manage behaviour well through effective use of questioning that promotes learners' interest and motivation to succeed
- most teachers use planning effectively to ensure a variety of well-paced activities that meet the needs of the majority of learners and enable them to make good gains in knowledge and understanding
- the majority of teachers use good explanation with helpful illustration to reinforce learners' understanding of theoretical concepts and legal process; teachers encourage most learners to develop their skills independently well
- the large majority of teachers and assessors pay close attention to developing learners' English skills and as a result, the majority of learners improve their speaking, listening and writing skills
- assessors' good use of assessment and review meetings enables most learners to reflect and plan how to further develop their knowledge and skills particularly effectively
- apprentices benefit from good involvement from employers who work closely with assessors and provide specific opportunities to enable apprentices to further their development in the workplace.

### Administration is not yet outstanding because:

- the proportion of adults who complete their courses successfully is below the national rate over time
- a few teachers do not use information on learners' starting points to ensure they enrol on the appropriate course and level resulting in a few not making sufficient progress
- a small minority of learners aged 16 to 18 do not have opportunities to improve their understanding of the sector and develop their employment-related skills through work experience
- teachers do not ensure all adult learners on entry-level courses receive sufficient tuition and guidance to help them stay in learning and achieve
- a small minority of younger administration learners do not attend their English and mathematics lessons regularly and as a result, they do not make as much progress in developing these skills.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Good

- Leadership and management have improved significantly since the previous inspection and they are now good. The Principal and recently restructured management team provide strong leadership; they manage change well and have implemented skilfully a clear strategy to improve teaching, learning and assessment that focuses on raising standards for learners. The majority of staff are highly motivated and understand this strategy well, and are committed to the continued growth and development of the college.
- Governors and leaders have an ambitious vision for learners in the South Essex region and beyond. Leaders and managers' engagement with the local enterprise partnership (LEP), the local council and the community is very strong. Leaders' strategic priorities and curriculum provision align very closely with those of the LEP. Their response to local and to regional economic and community needs, such as in developing provision to meet the requirements of the business logistics and supply chain industry, is good.
- Leaders have extended their approach to evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and strengthened the management of staff performance to tackle weaker teaching well. Teachers value highly the individual coaching and mentoring they receive from advanced practitioners. Training, tailored well to the individual development needs of teachers, allows them to advance and improve their teaching skills. Managers ensure that staff who fail to improve their teaching practice despite intensive help, leave swiftly. A greater proportion of teaching is now good, but further improvement is required to ensure that all learners experience good learning; too much teaching, learning and assessment requires further improvement.
- Managers have improved most aspects of study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19. The majority of learners on study programmes have access to purposeful work experience that enables them to develop their skills and prepare well for employment. However, around a quarter do not. Attendance and punctuality in too many subjects require urgent improvement. In English and mathematics, attendance remains too low to ensure that all learners develop and improve these important skills sufficiently. Younger learners on English and mathematics functional skills courses do not continue to receive discrete tuition if they achieve their qualification in-year; as a result, this limits the progress they make to develop their skills further.
- Leaders have responded appropriately to the low levels of functional skills achievement by appointing a new subject manager with responsibility for improving standards. However, it is too soon to judge whether this will lead to sustained improvement.
- Governors support the work of the senior leaders effectively. They receive accurate, detailed information that enables them to provide robust support and challenge on financial management, quality improvement and performance. Governors linked to subject teams provide appropriate support and challenge to managers.
- Leaders and managers meet frequently and use a range of indicators to evaluate performance in subject areas against set targets. They monitor progress rigorously. As a result, actions to resolve the majority of key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successful, although further improvement in teaching, learning and assessment is required. The management of the extensive subcontracted provision is good.
- Strong financial management has provided for an ambitious programme of investment in innovative, industry standard teaching and learning resources. The new campus in the centre of Thurrock benefits learners and the local community significantly, providing theatre space, restaurants, and hairdressing and beauty salons.
- Self-assessment is comprehensive and broadly accurate. Managers and staff are appropriately self-critical of their own performance and use the views of learners, partners and employers well to identify areas of underperformance. Improvements in the availability and use of data now

enable managers to plan remedial action to rectify identified areas of underperformance at course level.

- The college is a safe environment for learners who demonstrate a mutual respect for both staff and their peers. Leaders have established an inclusive environment that welcomes all learners regardless of their background. There are very few gaps in achievement between different groups. However, not enough care leavers and those with experience of local authority care stay in learning and attend as well as their peers. Leaders have dedicated greater resources to ensuring that learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities perform as well as their peers on classroom-based courses. However, while leaders' in-year data indicate that the gap is narrowing, it remains too wide.
- Safeguarding arrangements across the college are good and managed very well. Leaders meet their statutory responsibility fully in relation to safeguarding; designated governors and staff responsible for safeguarding have strong links with external agencies, including the local safeguarding children board and the police with regard to the 'Prevent' agenda. All staff within the college have received training on safeguarding, including training specifically to protect learners from radicalisation. Staff are able to identify quickly any learners, or groups of learners who are at risk. Support for these learners is good. Learners feel very safe and know how to raise concerns should they experience bullying or discrimination. Good arrangements are in place to teach learners about safeguarding, including e-safety, and to inform them of the dangers of radicalisation. Managers are highly visible in all areas of the college

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### South Essex College of Further and Higher Education

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3			3		3	2		
Outcomes for learners	3			3		3	2		
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3			3		3	2		
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2			2		2	2		

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Early Years and Playwork</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Science</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mathematics and Statistics</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Engineering</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Sport, Leisure and Recreation</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Foundation English</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Administration</b>	<b>2</b>

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	General further education college							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	14+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	17,389							
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Ms Angela O' Donoghue							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	November 2013							
<b>Website address</b>	www.southessex.ac.uk							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	392	317	1,581	1,081	3,724	840	59	90
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	486	481	188	613	0	14		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	5							
<b>Full-time</b>	5							
<b>Part-time</b>	0							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	589							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Central Training Academy</li> <li>▪ Crown Vocational Training</li> <li>▪ Debut Nail and Beauty</li> <li>▪ Eden Training</li> <li>▪ ITEC Learning Technologies</li> <li>▪ IWA</li> <li>▪ JET Hairdressing Academy</li> <li>▪ SCL</li> <li>▪ SLIC Training</li> <li>▪ Vocational Training Services.</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

South Essex College of Further and Higher Education has three main centres serving the towns and surrounding areas of Southend-on-Sea, Basildon and Grays in Thurrock. The areas form part of the London Gateway sub-region and has a population of around 660,000. The number of adults of working age who are not working and in receipt of benefits is higher than the national average in Southend-on-Sea and in Thurrock and around the national average in Basildon. The percentage of the population with no qualifications is significantly higher than that nationally in Thurrock. The proportion of pupils aged 16 achieving five A\*-C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is slightly above the national rate in Thurrock and considerably above in Southend-on-Sea.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Matt Vaughan HMI

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

## What inspection judgements mean

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

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

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012)

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