

Suffolk One

Scrivener Drive, Pinewood, Ipswich, IP8 3SU

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Suffolk One is an outstanding school because, regardless of their starting points at the age of 16, students make exceptional progress during their time at the college and achieve outstanding results.
- Teachers use their specialist expertise to meet skilfully the specific needs and aspirations of learners at the college, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Students' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning also underpin their impressive progress.
- The college has created an excellent environment for learners, including those who might be daunted by its size. Students feel completely safe and fully supported.
- Since the last inspection, outcomes at the college have gone from strength to strength because senior and middle leaders have been relentless in driving improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Leadership and management are good rather than outstanding because senior leaders, including governors, are too narrowly focused on students' achievement. There are shortcomings in the way that senior leaders monitor the college's work and implement necessary developments and changes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 48 lessons in a range of subjects and across the different levels of course accreditation. A number of observations were carried out jointly with members of the college's senior leadership team.
- The inspection team held meetings with nominated senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and three groups of students. Inspectors held telephone conversations with two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 37 responses received through the Parent View online survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised the college plans, records relating to the quality of teaching, the assessment, attainment and progress of students, college policies and procedures, and the arrangements for safeguarding students.
- Inspectors analysed 144 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Paul Brooker, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector
Lynn Kenworthy	Additional Inspector
James Fuller	Additional Inspector
Vanessa Love	Additional Inspector
Harpreet Nagra	Seconded Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Suffolk One is registered as a school, but is referred to as a college. It is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Around half of students are enrolled on GCE A and AS subjects, with most others on vocational provision including a wide range of level 3 National Diplomas and some level 2 and level 4 provision. Up to 80 places are funded in Year 12 and also in Year 13 for the college's foundation learning provision, which is at entry and level 1 for students with disabilities or special educational needs.
- The very large majority of the student population is White British, and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is small.
- There are more girls than boys on roll.
- The proportion of students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- As a post-16 institution, the college receives no additional pupil premium funding for disadvantaged students. However, the proportion of disadvantaged students (those known to be entitled to free school meals or were previously classified as eligible for the pupil premium) is lower than typically found in secondary schools nationally.
- The students' prior attainment when they start college at the age of 16 is typically below the national figure for post-16 institutions. The proportion of students with the highest GCSE grades is well below average.
- The government does not set floor standards for the attainment and progress of post-16 institutions.
- Plans are in place for the college to convert to academy status, as early as September 2015, as part of the Suffolk Academies Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the leadership and management of senior leaders and governors through improving the effectiveness of the college's monitoring, evaluation and forward-planning by ensuring that:
 - there is closer attention to detail in the way that senior leaders and governors check the college's work
 - the provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is more carefully monitored and their progress tracked more rigorously
 - the participation and achievement of disadvantaged students is analysed so that what the college does so successfully is developed more widely
 - the implementation of necessary developments is timely, well planned and clearly communicated to key stakeholders.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers at every level have been relentless in securing high achievement for all students. They have successfully driven improvement since the last inspection, when the college was judged good. The monitoring of teaching is systematic, and the routine tracking of students' progress ensures that any individual issues are quickly identified and suitable support or intervention is immediately implemented. This aspect of leadership and management is excellent.
- In a college offering in excess of 70 options for students in Year 12 and Year 13, some variability and year-on-year fluctuation in outcomes is inevitable. Subject leaders have been very effective in using their monitoring, combined with targeted support, to eradicate inconsistency since the last inspection. Middle leaders have effectively led improvements in teaching, for example by sharing good practice observed through 'open door' observations and by encouraging staff to observe in subject areas outside their own.
- The college has achieved its stated aims of widening participation and extending the range of learning opportunities for post-16 learners in the local area. However, its student numbers have not grown as quickly as initially projected, and this has made it difficult for leaders to reduce the budget deficit that has burdened the college from its inception. In the summer term 2014, the decision to cut the time allocated to the college's foundation learning courses for disabled students and those who have special educational needs understandably met with considerable parental opposition, and was subsequently amended. Senior leaders did not communicate well enough with parents and others on this issue.
- The urgent need for the college to cut its costs and manage the repayment of its licensed deficit have necessitated a restructuring of senior and middle leadership, increased contact-time for teachers and led to planned cutbacks in provision. These changes have inevitably affected staff morale, which was highly positive in previous college surveys. A large majority of staff questionnaires returned on this inspection were wholly positive about the college, but a significant number of staff were critical of senior leadership, particularly the decision-making and the quality of communication by senior leaders.
- The college's monitoring of specific groups of students is not sharp enough. Although students achieve exceptionally well, leaders do not analyse meticulously the progress of the most-able students or disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Disadvantaged students are not identified as a discrete group, so it is not possible to check how quickly the achievement gap is closing for these students or what it is that the college does so well for them.
- The college's systems for providing advice and guidance, including careers guidance, are a notable strength. Students are carefully counselled on their options choices and these are carefully reviewed so that changes can be made at a suitably early stage. Students say that guidance on post-college options is of a high quality.
- The college has worked hard to develop strong and productive links with employers, who provide high quality practical support for students. The local authority cites the college as an exemplary example of employer engagement. The development of the enterprise and entrepreneurship hub, and work with the Institute of Directors, are examples of how links have been developed to promote excellent experiences for students, raise aspirations and strengthen their employability.
- The college has made progress in introducing the new requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes, but the implementation has not been planned strategically. The number of work experience placements has increased to 360 this year, and the quality of these placements has improved. Non-qualification activities, including enrichment, that are open to students are many and varied.
- Despite its size, the college has a strong sense of community where people's differences are accepted and valued. The college actively promotes equality of opportunity and challenges discrimination. There is a strong drive to improve opportunities for students who might be disadvantaged by their economic or social circumstances, and secure their full participation and academic success. Oversight of the college's most vulnerable students is very good.
- Senior leaders point to the college's core values of inclusivity, mutual respect and tolerance as evidence that fundamental British values are embedded in the everyday lives of students. The promotion of

students' social and moral development is strong. The college seizes opportunities, for example with their own 'Question Time' during the recent General Election, to develop students' understanding of democracy and to debate issues such as individual liberty. The debating society is very active and successful, but senior leaders have not audited or planned systematically the inclusion of fundamental British values as part of an entitlement curriculum for all.

- The college communicates routinely with parents through email, and quickly alerts them to any issues that arise about their child's progress, punctuality, attendance or behaviour. The low response on Ofsted's Parent View reflects the fact that it is the students themselves who take prime responsibility for their own learning and achievement.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements. Policies and procedures are in place and are regularly reviewed. Staff routinely receive training on child protection and how to be alert to safeguarding issues. Initiatives, such as 'cyber-bullying day', seek to raise awareness of risks and how to address these.
- The local authority has provided challenge and support, as necessary. The 16-19 adviser has provided suitable support in standardising evaluations of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors share the ambition of senior leaders to secure the highest standards for students and have, since the college first opened, played a strategic role in its development and improvement. They ensure that robust procedures are in place to manage the performance of teachers. They make judicious decisions about pay progression and remuneration, based on the effectiveness of individual staff.
 - The governing body has worked hard to secure the college's financial viability and steer it through the difficult period of budgetary deficit.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the college, including the quality of teaching and student achievement, but are not well enough informed about the achievement and participation of specific groups of learners. This is because they are not furnished with this information. Without this, governors cannot hold leaders to account on some important matters.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- Although the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly, students behave impeccably in lessons and around the college. Behaviour in social areas is exemplary during breaks and lunch time, and students are polite and considerate to one another and visitors.
- Students' attitudes to learning are excellent. They settle quickly to their learning, respond to teachers' high expectations and are highly self-motivated. Students readily support one another, for example in the way that they review one another's work, and collaborate well on assignments to achieve better results.
- The onus on students to take responsibility for their own learning and progress means that they develop the essential independence and resilience that prepares them well for the next stage of their education or employment. Students' attendance is high and they are punctual to lessons.
- Relationships between students and with adults are remarkably harmonious. Students are respectful and tolerant of one another, and show sensitivity to the needs of others.

Safety

- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students know how to stay safe. They understand the risks posed by using social media and the internet. They say that they do not come across discriminatory language and that bullying is almost non-existent. Nonetheless, they feel confident that there are trusted adults whom they could approach to resolve any

issues that might arise.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently good across the college, and is often outstanding. As a result, students, including disabled students, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged students and the most able, are making sustained progress that leads to outstanding achievement.
- Teachers' infectious enthusiasm and their love of their subjects generate high levels of commitment from the students. This creates a positive climate for learning in lessons, which raises everyone's expectations and drives high aspiration and achievement.
- Teachers expect a lot of their students in terms of conduct, effort and achievement. Teachers know their students well and how they can improve to achieve their full potential. This, combined with teachers' excellent grasp of the assessment requirements of the courses they deliver, means that students are exceptionally well prepared when it comes to external assessments and examinations.
- The long lessons dictate that teachers have to employ a range of teaching strategies, balancing high quality inputs with opportunities for students to apply and develop new learning, often working in small groups or independently. This approach, combined with setting suitable homework, ensures that students quickly learn the attributes of self-discipline, independence and responsibility that equip them well for life after college, on further or higher education courses, or in employment or training.
- Teachers plan and teach lessons that enable pupils to learn exceptionally well, but opportunities to develop students' wider knowledge and employability skills, including their speaking, listening and writing, are too often overlooked. This is the case when teachers' planning and marking are too narrowly focused on examination criteria. On occasions, teachers helpfully go beyond the syllabus; in an engineering lesson the teacher introduced an air-conditioning unit, even though not part of the course, because students would be likely to encounter this in the workplace.
- Teachers use questioning and marking well to check students' understanding systematically. They follow this up with high quality one-to-one support both during lessons and, additionally, when students seek additional help. Students speak of teachers 'going the extra mile' to help them. The college offers plenty of additional revision sessions.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Irrespective of their starting points at the age of 16, students achieve exceptionally well in both academic and vocational courses. Published results in 2014 place the college in the top 5% of schools and colleges for 'value added'. The college's rigorous assessment and tracking system indicates that results this year will be equally impressive.
- Standards have risen since the last inspection, including the overall pass grades on vocational and academic courses and the proportion of higher grades achieved. Results in 2014 indicate that students make outstanding progress. The proportion of students gaining A* to C grades in English and/or in mathematics GCSE resit examinations far exceeded the national figure in 2014, particularly in English. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well on their foundation learning courses, with very high pass rates and completion rates.
- Results in 2014 in a few subjects lagged behind others, for example in mathematics, physics, graphics, German and philosophy at AS level and in music, photography, sport and physical education, religious education and further mathematics at A level, but this list is far outweighed by the many subjects in which students excelled. Prominent among the high-achieving subjects were most of the arts options in Year 12 and Year 13. Outcomes on vocational programmes are also outstanding.
- Subject completion and retention rates are comparatively high, including for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, because students are suitably guided into option choices and are closely monitored in case they are struggling. Currently, more students have remained on their courses than in the previous year. Outstanding achievement and high quality advice and guidance, including from

personal progress tutors, ensure that students' progression rates are also high.

- The most-able students achieve exceptionally well. The proportion of highest grades, A*A at A level and AS level and Distinction* in vocational options, has increased since the last inspection. This has been a key priority for the college.
- The college pays very close attention to the needs and aspirations of its most vulnerable students, including looked after children and individuals whose personal circumstances might otherwise jeopardise their sustainable achievement. Staff can point to some remarkable success stories.
- Given that disadvantaged students at the college make better progress than students nationally, it is evident that gaps in achievement evident at the age of 16 are narrowing. However, the college does not collate this information to evaluate its effectiveness in this regard.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135863
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	461674

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Other Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	16–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1750
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1750
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	The Venerable Ian Morgan
Principal	Alan Whittaker
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2012
Telephone number	01473 556603
Email address	admin@suffolkone.ac.uk

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