

Long Stratton High School

Manor Road, Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2XR

Inspection dates 27–28 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most students make good progress and learn well in many subjects.
- The proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has improved well since the previous inspection. Outcomes are above the national average.
- Good leadership and management of teaching have fostered improvements ensuring good learning in lessons and over time.
- Good arrangements are made to develop students' skills in literacy and numeracy. Most make at least good progress to achieve their expected levels.
- Students behave well. Exclusions are very low and attendance is on an upward trend and is above average. The school is happy and harmonious. Students feel safe and valued. They enjoy the extensive array of opportunities available.
- The acting headteacher offers good and clear leadership. He is well supported by his good deputy headteacher and by the recently enlarged and improving senior leadership team.
- Governance is good. The governing body supports the school well and is fully involved. Governors are adept at holding staff to account for the school's performance. They know its strengths but are equally informed about what needs improving. They are determined that the school thrives and that it is successful.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a minority of lessons, students are not given sufficient scope to develop skills as independent learners. Such lessons rely too much on the teacher imparting information rather than students being encouraged to research answers for themselves.
- Although the quality of assessment is generally good, opportunities are sometimes missed to involve students in evaluating their own work.
- Though most disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress, a small minority do less well because in some lessons the work set is not appropriately targeted to build on their prior learning.
- There are some shortcomings in communication with parents in regard to the way concerns are addressed and in the opportunities to give the school feedback on the information received.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons, each involving a different teacher. A small selection of lessons was jointly observed with senior members of staff.
- Meetings were held with four different groups of students, members of the governing body, the local authority, a representative from a local Christian group, and a wide variety of staff including senior managers, middle managers and non-teaching staff.
- Inspectors took account of 85 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Thirty-nine responses to the staff inspection questionnaire were also considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised examples of students’ past and present work and looked at various documents. These included the school’s self-evaluation and planning, data on students’ progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Bill Stoneham, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Paul Bartlett	Additional inspector
Alan Jarvis	Additional inspector
Kathleen Yates	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is low. At the time of the inspection there were no students on roll whose first language was other than English.
- The proportion supported at school action is above average. The proportion of disabled students is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus and with statements of special educational need.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average.
- Since the previous inspection there have been major changes in the school's senior management. For the last 15 months the school has been led by an acting headteacher. During this time, and with support from the local authority, the senior leadership team has been expanded.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the start of the summer term 2013, increase the proportion of lessons featuring outstanding teaching and learning, and eradicate all teaching that is inadequate or requires improvement, by ensuring that:
 - in all lessons, students have even more opportunities to work independently and investigate ideas and develop answers for themselves
 - students are given more opportunities to peer- and self-assess their learning and progress
 - all staff plan lessons that properly meet the needs of all students who are disabled or who have special educational needs, so that all are thoroughly challenged by appropriately targeted work in every single lesson.
- Improve communication with parents and carers by ensuring that:
 - any concerns raised are responded to quickly and in detail
 - the school develops appropriate systems to seek and record parent and carers' views on the quality of information relating to their child's progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- This is an improving school where standards are rising. GCSE results, including English and mathematics, have improved well since the last inspection. The proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics is above average.
- In the overwhelming majority of lessons, students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and those supported through pupil premium, make at least good progress.
- In some of the less effective lessons, the progress made by a small minority of disabled students and those with special educational needs is not as good as other groups. This is because they are not consistently challenged with appropriately targeted work in some of their lessons.
- Good systems are in place to identify students who join the school in Year 7 with weaknesses in the literacy and numeracy skills. Overall, these students make good progress because of the effective arrangements that exist to boost their skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics.
- The performance of every student is monitored well and examination and other data is used effectively to set challenging targets. The performance of different groups is analysed well and intervention work is helping to ensure that gaps in the performance of different groups are narrowing, especially in comparison to those of all students nationally. In 2012, students funded under the pupil premium exceeded their targets.
- Few students leave school at the end of Year 11 without a placement in education, training or employment. The school prepares students well for the next stage in their careers.
- An overwhelming majority of parents and carers responding to the online questionnaire believe their child is making at least good progress. Inspection evidence supports this view.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching was seen in most lessons and featured in both key stages and across all subjects of the curriculum. There was little evidence of consistently outstanding teaching.
- Teachers' expectations of what students could do and achieve were at least good in the vast majority of lessons. Occasionally, where teaching and learning required improvement, expectations were not high enough and there was a tendency for the teacher to do too much of the work, thereby restricting the scope for students to learn by working independently.
- Learning over time is good because work is usually marked well and the feedback offered helps students to improve. Assessment procedures have improved well since the previous inspection and this too is ensuring good learning in lessons and over time.
- In most lessons good provision is made for students to assess their progress. In a small minority of cases where teaching is less effective, students are not consistently encouraged to peer- and self-assess their learning.

- The key skills of literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology are taught well across all subjects of the curriculum. This too contributes to good learning and progress over time.
- Most lessons are planned well with the students' different needs catered for fully. In most lessons, planning for those who are disabled or who have special educational needs is good and effective. Teaching assistants are well briefed and work in unison with class teachers for the benefit of the students. In a small minority of lessons, across all years, planning for this group lacks precision.
- Where teaching is most effective, pace is appropriate, the work is challenging and students work independently and collaboratively to seek solutions and answers to set problems. For example, in an especially good Year 7 hockey lesson, students were given clear guidance on how to develop their stick control and dribbling skills: a series of short practical sessions, accompanied by sharp recap sessions, ensured all made rapid progress.
- Outstanding teaching was also seen in a Year 7 design technology lesson where clear instructions were offered and the task was challenging and engaging. As a result, rapid progress was made in asymmetric drawing and all students worked with commendable interest and endeavour.
- An overwhelming majority of parents and carers responding to the online questionnaire said that teaching is at least good. The inspection team agrees.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour has improved well since the previous inspection. Behaviour over time, around the school and in lessons is good. Students behave well, show respect and are polite and courteous. These qualities contribute well to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attitudes to learning are positive. Students enjoy attending the school and feel safe and well catered for. Though a small minority of parents and carers expressed some reservations about behaviour and how it is managed, the majority commented that behaviour is at least good.
- Students informed the inspectors that behaviour has improved well over the last year. Rare incidents of unacceptable behaviour are managed consistently well by staff and it is rare for unacceptable conduct to disturb learning. The students claimed that behaviour had improved because there are now better systems for behaviour management and a consistent application of sanctions.
- Improved behaviour over time is reflected in the very low rate of exclusions over the last few years. The use of fixed-term or permanent exclusions is extremely rare.
- Students informed inspectors that incidents of bullying are rare and, if they do occur, they know which staff to turn to. They also expressed great confidence in staff. Any incidents reported are always thoroughly and properly investigated.
- Students have an awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Work in

lessons such as personal, social and health education (PSHE) examines the pernicious aspects of bullying, including racism and homophobic behaviour, and encourages students to reflect on how to behave well and to be polite.

- Attendance has improved well since the previous inspection and is above average. Students are invariably punctual to school and to lessons. This is a good achievement considering the long distances that many have to travel.
- Parents, carers and students all regard the school as safe. Students praise the school for being happy and enjoyable and they appreciate the many opportunities they are offered to seek and exercise responsibility. Detailed work in PSHE enables the students to learn about the harmful effects of unhealthy lifestyles, including drug and alcohol abuse.
- This is a good, happy and improving school because of the mutual respect that exists between students, and students and their staff.

The leadership and management are good

- Significant changes have taken place in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. The school is under the leadership of an acting headteacher, who is well supported by an extended senior team and middle managers. Between them they have established high expectations for the students and an ambitious vision for the school.
- This is a school that has improved well since the last inspection and there is a good capacity for further improvement. Monitoring and evaluation procedures have improved well under the guidance of the acting headteacher, helping to ensure that progress is good and that gaps in performance between different groups and all students nationally are closing.
- Pupil premium funding is spent well to help students improve their literacy skills, in particular, and to improve attainment in both English and mathematics.
- Teaching and learning are managed well and the provision for the professional development of staff is good. This is reflected in the good and better teaching seen during the inspection.
- Self-evaluation has improved and is now good. Senior staff and the governors know the school well. They are aware of its strengths but can identify areas where further improvements are required.
- Improvements in students' outcomes can also be attributed to improvements in the curriculum. The present curriculum offers good opportunities for students to study foreign languages, for example. It successfully promotes good behaviour and safety and contributes well to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The extensive extra-curricular provision, featuring the arts, sport and visits to places such as Cologne and Rome enables the students to develop a keen understanding of fair play and different cultures.
- Staff morale is high. Almost all respondents to the staff inspection questionnaire were positive. As one member of staff commented, 'I feel valued and respected as a member of staff. I am proud to be part of such a good team and enjoy coming to work every day.'

- The local authority has given good support and has been instrumental in moving the school to a position where its overall effectiveness is now good.
- Most parents and carers value the school and believe it is providing a good education. A significant minority would like to see communications between school and home improved. They would especially like to see a prompter response to concerns and improvements in the information received about their child's progress. The inspection team concurs with this view.

■ **The governance of the school**

- is based on governors' good knowledge of the school and their determination for it to improve even further
 - functions effectively in governors' roles as 'critical friends'; they are adept at holding the school to account and seeking explanations whenever performance slips below the high standards they have set
 - ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding.
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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	121160
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	402010

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	649
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Sacks
Headteacher	John Wilson (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2009
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