

Hellesdon High School

187 Middletons Lane, Hellesdon, Norwich, NR6 5SB

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Good teaching is making sure that the achievement of all groups of students in English, mathematics and science is at least good and rapidly improving.
- The school has been particularly successful in raising the achievement of girls, which is now outstanding.
- Students are proud representatives of their school. They behave well, feel safe and contribute to the running of the school and the local community.
- Staff, teachers and governors are delighted by the school's accomplishments and have a passion to improve it further.
- Strong leadership by the headteacher, other senior leaders and governors is raising the quality of teaching and learning.
- The sixth form is good. Good teaching means that students achieve well on A-level courses, and progress on AS-level courses is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching still requires improvement, and not enough teaching is outstanding across the school.
- There are small variations in students' achievement in different subjects.
- Boys' achievement is good and improving, but is not as high as that of the girls.
- The progress made by students who have additional learning needs is now good, although their attainment has not yet caught up.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 46 lessons, observing 45 teachers. Nine lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. The team also conducted a series of brief observations of learning in classrooms and around the school. All members of the inspection team had lunch with the students and discussed their views about the school.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 72 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school’s analysis of its own questionnaire responses.
- They observed the school’s work and looked at improvement plans, records and analyses of students’ behaviour, the tracking of students’ progress and examples of students’ work. They looked at the school’s attendance figures and monitoring information.

Inspection team

Raymond Lau, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lisa Fraser	Additional Inspector
Peter Lawley	Additional Inspector
John Mason	Additional Inspector
David Webster	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average secondary school. Almost all students are from a White British background and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of girls in the school is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided to the school for students in challenging circumstances) is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is below average, but for those at school action plus and students with a statement of special educational needs it is average. Some students have behavioural, emotional and social and/or specific learning difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Alternative provision is made for students studying a wide range of courses leading to BTEC and other qualifications in partnership with other local providers, including further education colleges and private contractors.
- The school converted to academy status in April 2012. The overall effectiveness of the predecessor school, which had the same name, was judged to be satisfactory when it was last inspection in November 2009.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - sharing best practice in teaching, so as to accelerate students' progress and make sure they do equally well in different subjects across the school
 - giving students more opportunities to work independently and collaboratively
 - using more specific questioning to challenge students' thinking and reflection
 - ensuring that marking and assessment show precisely how students can reach the next level.
- Accelerate achievement to outstanding for all groups of students by:
 - making sure that boys and more-able students are always given demanding work at the right level in different subjects, so their achievement is consistently above national expectations
 - further improving the effectiveness of support for students who are eligible for the pupil premium, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, so that their attainment is closer to that of all other groups.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students usually enter the school with attainment levels that are broadly average, although the students currently in Years 9 and 11 joined with levels that were below average. Standards in Year 11 are above average in most subjects, including English and mathematics. The school enters students early for examinations. Students educated off site make good progress.
- Girls' achievement is outstanding. Boys' achievement is good and improving. While the gaps are closing, differences in attainment across subjects remain as the speed of girls' progress increases. Current achievement of all students is improving across the school as a result of more effective teaching and very thorough tracking and monitoring of their progress.
- Students' progress in English and mathematics is good. In addition to these key subjects, students achieve well in sciences, art, history, and design and technology. Variations in teaching quality mean that achievement is not as strong in modern foreign languages, food technology and GCSE physical education.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs now make good progress. Variations in progress between those at school action plus, and those with a statement of special educational needs have been ironed out. The school is providing more focused help and guidance for these groups, including extra one-to-one adult support. As a result their achievement is improving, though the school acknowledges that there are still gaps in attainment.
- The achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium funding is also improving. The school has used the funding to support learning by purchasing additional resources, such as textbooks, and providing additional staff in English and mathematics. The achievement of these students is now generally similar to that of other students. The gap between their attainment and that of other students is closing but further work is needed.
- Achievement in the sixth form is now good. Standards on A-level courses are above average, and they are average but beginning to improve with more effective teaching on AS-level courses. Outstanding achievement was seen in Year 12 drama, where students responded imaginatively and creatively to the teacher's instruction, and produced exceptional group performances.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is clear evidence of good teaching across the school. A small amount of teaching is outstanding. The characteristics of more effective teaching include effective use of subject knowledge and strong relationships between teachers and students, planning that matches the needs of the learners, and teachers' clear and concise explanations. As a result, students are fully involved in learning activities. There are good literacy and numeracy links across different subjects.
- A minority of teaching still requires improvement. In these cases, the teacher dominates the lesson by talking too much and/or over-directing learning. This cuts down students' opportunities to develop their independent learning skills by working on their own or in groups. As a result, students' progress slows and, on occasion, some students do not concentrate enough. In addition, time is not always used effectively at the beginning of lessons, when teachers give

tasks that do not interest students or stretch them to the full extent of abilities. Teachers' questions do not make students think deeply about their learning.

- The quality of marking and assessment is generally good, although when students are given the opportunity to assess their own or others' work, their assessments are not always accurate. Teachers regularly mark students' work and usually lay out the next steps for learning. In a few cases, their feedback does not specifically tell the students how to achieve a higher level or grade.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are proud to be part of the school. They are polite, and generally supportive of each other and staff. They attend well and feel safe in and around the school. Students have a good understanding of safe practice, especially when online.
- Students report that bullying occasionally occurs but are confident that adults will deal with it appropriately and quickly. Students understand the different forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying.
- The students interviewed feel that behaviour is good. They say that most students behave well in lessons, although a small minority very occasionally do not or choose not to.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning match the quality of teaching. In most lessons, students are actively involved in their learning. They show outstanding attitudes when teachers have established excellent rapport with them and developed a very positive culture for learning. In these lessons, students are challenged to support each other and are completely engrossed in their work. Even when teaching is weaker, students rarely behave inappropriately.
- The students have a wide range of opportunities to develop responsibilities to support the running of the school, and make contributions to the local community. For example, older students read with younger ones, and work with a local feeder primary school. Some students act as mentors, some serve on the school council, and others act as leaders in sport.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He has restructured and strengthened the leadership team with a particular focus on English and mathematics. This is leading to good and improving achievement. Excellent tracking systems enable staff to check on students' progress, so that any underperformance is quickly spotted. Teachers then plan and implement strategies to support students and raise their achievement.
 - Senior leaders hold middle leaders responsible for performance in their specialist areas. There is some variation in students' attainment in different subjects, and leaders are working to iron out inconsistencies.
 - The management of teaching is good. Monitoring shows where improvement is needed and appropriate training is given. Nevertheless, there is not enough focus on raising the proportion of good teaching to outstanding across the school, and a minority of lessons require improvement. Leaders are aware of the need to share more widely examples of best teaching practice.
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- Students enjoy a good range of academic subjects but also an increasing variety of work-related courses. The alternative provision is good, and close links with a range of providers ensure that the courses are personalised to the needs of the individuals. During the inspection, a group of Year 10 students recently started in the school's new hairdressing salon were clearly developing effective communication and teamwork skills, alongside specialist subject skills.
 - The enrichment programme is very strong in sports and the arts. The visual artwork is of exceptional quality and proudly displayed. The school successfully reached the final stages of the national Rolls-Royce science competition.
 - The school has good links with the community. Primary schools use the school's pool to assist children in learning to swim. Strong links with colleges and private contractors support specific subject areas, particularly in Key Stage 4, and help to prepare students for the working world.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body thoroughly reviews the school's policies and procedures and its own work. All national safeguarding requirements are fully met. An outstanding feature is governors' rigour in highlighting and developing the skills they need. The induction for governors is held up as an example of best practice by the local authority. Governors clearly know about the quality of teaching and how well students are performing against national benchmarks. They review and understand the performance of staff. Governors are passionate and highly committed to students and the school's successes. They ensure that appropriate use is made of financial resources. Governors have a good understanding of how the pupil premium money is used and monitor the outcomes. They are aware that further development in this area is still required to raise the attainment of these students.
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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	138039
Local authority	N/a
Inspection number	402785

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1256
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Griffiths
Headteacher	Gerard Batty
Date of previous school inspection	N/a
Telephone number	01603 424711
Fax number	01603 487602
Email address	admin@hellesdonhigh.norfolk.sch.uk

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