

The John Warner School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117597
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358169
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	1233
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Cockman
Headteacher	David Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2007
School address	Stanstead Road Hoddesdon EN11 0QF
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 41 teachers and 41 lessons, and held meetings with the governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and analysed 236 questionnaires from parents and carers, 116 from students and 64 from staff. The team also looked at documents and policies including those relating to the safeguarding of students, information the school had collected about the students' progress and the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What the current attainment and progress are, particularly in mathematics and science.
- How effectively teachers use assessment in lessons and involve students in assessing their own learning.
- The effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation, especially that of subject leaders, in accelerating improvement.

Information about the school

John Warner is a larger than average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. Most students are of White British heritage and there are very few from other ethnic backgrounds or whose first language is not English. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average and the proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is much lower than average. The school is a specialist school in science. The school has many awards, including Healthy School status and the International Award for the development of students' understanding of other cultures. There is out of term day care provision for 4 to 12 year olds on the school site. This is managed by a private provider and is subject to a separate inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**1****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****1**

Main findings

The John Warner School is an outstanding school that has gone from strength to strength, improving strongly over the years. Outcomes for students in the main school are outstanding because they achieve well and many aspects of their personal development, including feeling safe, understanding of a healthy lifestyle, contribution to the community, future economic well-being and behaviour, are excellent. The school is very highly regarded in the local community and staff and students are very proud to belong to the school. Parents and carers are extremely positive about most aspects of the school and the following comments sum up the views of many: 'The school provides an excellent all round education' and 'The school has a very caring ethos and is superbly led'.

Since the previous inspection there have been many significant improvements. For example, outcomes in the rapidly expanding sixth form are now good, the achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is now good and attendance is high. The science specialism has enabled new technology to be introduced and partnerships to be developed that have helped secure many of the improvements. Attainment in subjects such as English, French and history are consistently high. Progress in subjects where attainment has not been as good, such as mathematics and science, is improving rapidly due to very accurate self-evaluation, rigorous monitoring, and changes to the curriculum to ensure that courses are tailored much better to the needs of all students. The curriculum is outstanding, not only in this respect, but also in the wider enrichment experiences for students. They eagerly told inspectors of a recent visit by Sir Ian McKellen and how he had impressed them with his charity work on antibullying. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Each child is known as an individual and this results in excellent behaviour and relationships which impact very well on learning.

Teaching is good and improving, aided by the introduction of a teaching and learning group and through close monitoring by leaders at all levels. However, there are a few lessons where teaching is still satisfactory and not enough where teaching is outstanding. There are insufficient opportunities for students to be actively involved in assessing their own learning. This means that in some areas progress is not rising as rapidly as it might do, nor attainment as high. At present new and inexperienced teachers are not mentored as effectively as they might be. There is much excellent practice in school in terms of teaching that is beginning to be shared well. However, the school recognises that this is an aspect that could be expanded to help in the further raising of attainment and acceleration of progress.

Central to the success of the school is the dedication of the headteacher. He is very ably assisted by the two deputy headteachers and a wide team of additional senior leaders. All have clear roles and work very well as a team. Middle leaders and staff feel very well supported and involved in the work of the school. Governance is outstanding and

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contributes very strongly to the school's success. The many improvements that have occurred since the previous inspection and the relentless drive to be even better, based on rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, mean that the capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate the rate of progress by:
- eradicating any teaching that is only satisfactory and having more teaching that is consistently outstanding, with as many opportunities as possible for students to be actively involved in assessing their own learning
 - mentoring more effectively new and inexperienced teachers
 - sharing more widely the best practice in teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Inspection evidence from lesson observations confirms that learning and progress are good overall, and sometimes outstanding, from average attainment on entry to the school. Along with above average attainment and clear enjoyment in lessons, this means that students' achievement is good. There is no significant difference in the progress of different groups of students. Very high specialist targets are now close to being met. Expectations are high and students enjoy a challenge. This was exemplified well in a Year 10 French lesson to develop listening skills where students were asked to identify features to enable them to achieve A/A* grades. In most lessons excellent behaviour makes a good contribution to learning and students work well together. This was seen to good effect in many lessons, including a Year 7 English lesson where students explored the language of war through poetry and imagery. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also progress well, in line with their peers. Much of the credit here is due to the excellent work of teaching assistants.

Students are in no doubt that they feel safe in school. They have an excellent understanding of what it means to be healthy. They appreciate the high standard of food provided in school and say that it has improved vastly. They enjoy the many opportunities to take part in sporting activities and clubs. A significant number of students are involved as Sports Leaders to help promote sport for local primary school pupils. Students are recognised for contributing very well to the local community, for example through their involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. There are many opportunities for students to take on responsibility in school and students have a strong voice through the school council. Students are particularly proud of roles such as Bully Busters where they act as a 'listening service' for their peers. There are extensive enterprise activities for a wide range of students from Years 7 to 13. Combined with high attendance, high attainment in English, information and communication technology (ICT) and above average attainment in mathematics, students leave school well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to pursue university courses, employment or training opportunities. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their understanding of international cultures is particularly good, because the school's promotion of community cohesion is good. However, their understanding of minority ethnic religions and cultures, reflecting those found in the United Kingdom as a whole, are less well developed.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Good and outstanding teaching is characterised by interesting activities, good pace and good questioning that challenges students well. In a Year 11 ICT lesson, students were seen thoroughly enjoying designing and exploring the features of a good invoice. Good assessment is evident in nearly all lessons and was particularly well exemplified in a Year 13 mathematics lesson where students were encouraged to enhance their examination technique through the use of past examination questions. Very occasionally, in lessons where learning is less secure, the pace of the lesson is too slow and teachers talk too much from the front of the class, giving pupils less opportunity to be involved in assessing their own learning. Teachers' marking is usually clear and helpful, but it is inconsistent in quality. Students have challenging individual targets in each subject and most know how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. This is helped by the e-school where students can access their own information.

The impact of the outstanding curriculum is seen in the outstanding outcomes for the students. It has outstanding breadth and balance to meet the needs of all students. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are embedded well throughout other subjects and the science specialism has helped to raise standards through the development of the 5 e lesson, which highlights the key features that should be present. The school has the 'ICT in Education' mark, as recognition of its high effectiveness. There is fast tracking in many subjects,

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including science, and excellent provision for gifted and talented students. A physical education talent academy provides tailored training and support for elite athletes. Relevant, flexible provision for those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has resulted in significantly improved progress since the previous inspection. There is a wide range of imaginative and extensive extra-curricular activities, including a Chinese club, an origami club and a philosophy club. Students speak very highly of these, saying they are 'brilliant'. The many enrichment experiences allow students to have memorable experiences and many are looking forward to their visit to a school in Borneo.

The school is rightly proud of its outstanding care, guidance and support and its reputation as an inclusive school. All students, including the most vulnerable, benefit greatly from a highly personalised and proactive approach to care, guidance and support. There are many comments from parents and carers complimenting the school on the 'very successful integration' of their children into Year 7.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

A highly cohesive leadership and management team is driving the school forward and is expertly steered by the headteacher and his deputy headteachers. Self-evaluation is extremely rigorous and incisive. Management of teaching and learning is excellent and there is a keen sense of everyone working together to raise standards even further. The staff questionnaires revealed that most staff feel valued and fully involved in what the school is trying to achieve. Middle leaders are fully involved in helping to drive up standards and progress. Engagement with parents and carers is good and there are very effective lines of communication. Partnerships are outstanding. The school has helped to raise the effectiveness of a neighbouring school and associations with higher education providers are leading to significant gains in personal development, such as master's degrees in education.

Safeguarding is exemplary and the school is held as a model of best practice in the local authority. Checks in all areas are thorough and up to date. Equality of opportunity is outstanding; racism, discrimination and poor behaviour are not tolerated and are rare. Community cohesion is good, particularly in relation to local and international communities. Governance is outstanding. Members of the governing body are knowledgeable, hold the school to account well, and evaluate not only the work of the school, but their own contributions. The school provides excellent value for money. This school is not complacent. Leaders fully understand that 'outstanding does not mean perfect' and there are comprehensive development plans in place to improve even further.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

The number of students entering the sixth form is increasing and attendance and retention rates are high. This is an inclusive sixth form that takes students from many other schools and has a wide attainment on entry. Overall this is broadly average. Progress is improving year on year. The majority of students make good progress and many reach above average attainment at the end of Year 13. A large number go on to higher education and the number who do not enter employment, training or further education is very low. Sixth-form students are highly articulate and excellent role models for younger students. Their contribution to the school and wider community is excellent. The school prefect team adopt roles within committees that contribute to sustainable development and they take a leading role in supporting the school's Green Team. Many students support younger ones through a range of activities in sports, drama and music. Some Year 12 students are involved in a paired reading scheme to help less able readers in Years 7 to 9. Many assist at a neighbouring school for pupils who have learning difficulties.

Sixth form teachers have very good subject knowledge and students' progress in lessons is good. Many lessons offer a good degree of challenge, as seen in a Year 13 history lesson on the rise of the Nazi Party, where students were skilfully questioned to make them think deeply. Independent learning was seen in many lessons, although this is not always the case. The curriculum provides a very good range of courses, including many vocational courses. Indeed, students told the inspectors that the wide choice of courses was a significant factor in their decision to enter the sixth form. Care, guidance and support are good and students appreciate that 'teachers have lots of time' for them. Increasingly, students are being given more focused academic guidance but currently this is not always sufficiently rigorous to identify underachievement early enough. The newly restructured

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leadership of the sixth form has been a factor securing improvements in teaching and learning. The rapid expansion has been coped with well and an environment has been provided where students feel welcome with space to work and relax in. At present, lines of accountability are not entirely clear, so that the best use of data is not being made to secure improvements as quickly as it might do. However, leaders demonstrate an accurate view of priorities and a clear agenda for further improvement.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Nearly one fifth of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. They were very positive about all aspects of the school's work, particularly the extent to which the school keeps their children safe and how well the school is led and managed. These were aspects that the inspectors felt the school was doing exceptionally well. A few parents and carers did not agree that the school dealt with unacceptable behaviour effectively. Inspectors followed up this concern but found behaviour to be excellent overall and students reported that any misbehaviour was dealt with appropriately. A few parents and carers felt that the school did not help the students to have a healthy lifestyle. This was something that the inspectors felt the school did particularly well, leading to the students having an outstanding understanding of a healthy lifestyle. A small minority of parents and carers felt that the school did not help them to support their child's learning. The inspectors felt that this was something that the school did well, but that there was variation in practice between different subject areas.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The John Warner School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 236 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1233 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	32	145	61	11	5	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	103	44	130	55	3	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	93	39	128	54	11	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	89	38	123	52	18	8	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	70	30	140	59	18	8	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	22	149	63	29	12	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	26	132	56	32	14	5	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	72	31	130	55	18	8	5	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	82	35	135	57	13	6	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	83	35	114	48	28	12	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	65	28	131	56	18	8	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	103	44	118	50	9	4	5	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	44	114	48	10	4	4	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 January 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The John Warner School, Hoddesdon, EN11 0QF

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you very much. We judged your school to be outstanding and we would like to share with you why we think this is so.

Students' outcomes are excellent and your academic achievement is good. A key to your success is the outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning the vast majority of you have. We judged teaching as good overall, but we saw some outstanding lessons during our visit where you were fully involved in assessing your own learning. You feel that your headteacher has a high profile around the school and along with other leaders has helped to bring about many improvements, such as raising standards in the sixth form. We agree with you.

You tell us that you feel very safe in school and that there is always someone to turn to when you need help. You told inspectors why you really enjoy your school and we agree that the outstanding curriculum and the very high levels of care, guidance and support you receive are indeed helping you to develop personal and academic skills for your daily lives.

Although your school has improved greatly, we believe that it can improve further, particularly that of your academic achievement. We have asked your headteacher to ensure that more teaching is consistently good or outstanding. We have also asked him to make sure that new and inexperienced teachers are mentored more effectively and that the best practice in teaching is shared more effectively. You can help by asking your teachers to tell you how you can judge if you are learning well.

We would like to wish you all the best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson

Lead inspector

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