

# Springwood High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121178
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	358954
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Thompson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1681
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	314
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Livesey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Queensway Gaywood, King's Lynn PE30 4AW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The team observed 52 lessons led by 52 different teachers. Inspectors held meetings and discussions with groups of students, members of the governing body, and the School Improvement Partner. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a representative sample of students' work, some policy documents and school reports. They scrutinised questionnaires returned by 619 parents and carers, 200 pupils and 115 staff.

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

- Are students safe in the school, and are safeguarding procedures robust and secure?
- What has been the impact of the actions taken to improve the attainment and progress of students?
- What is the impact of the school's specialist status and partnership arrangements on attainment and the progress made by students?
- What actions have been taken to reduce the large turnover of staff?

## Information about the school

The school is oversubscribed and larger than average. Student numbers have increased significantly in the recent past. Many students and their parents and carers are attracted to the school because of its reputation for outstanding provision in the performing arts. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most students have a White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportions of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational needs are above national averages. The school is part of the Opportunities West Norfolk partnership, a group of local secondary schools and colleges, and a cluster with local primary, junior and first schools. The school has had difficulty in recruiting staff until the current year. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

The school has specialist status as a performing arts college and teacher training school. The school has gained the Sportsmark award.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The school provides a good education in both the main school and the sixth form. Raising pupils' attainment has been given the highest priority by the senior leaders for the past two years. As a result, attainment in the key subjects of English and mathematics has risen and students are achieving well throughout the school. This success is founded on careful self-evaluation, good tracking of pupils' progress and the close monitoring of lessons. Consequently, gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding have been identified and tackled, an improved curriculum has been implemented, and programmes of staff training provided. Following the appointment of the headteacher and a number of effective teachers at the beginning of this academic year, the rate of improvement has accelerated still further and the school is well placed to continue on its trajectory of improvement.

As a result of its specialist status in performing arts, the school provides numerous high quality theatrical and musical extra-curricular activities. About one-third of the students take part in them and they are very effectively led by teachers who have previously worked in related industries. Classical and contemporary theatrical productions are given in the school's Kinetic theatre and occasional tours undertaken in Europe, Asia and Oceania. The school has a full orchestra, numerous bands of different types, choirs and vocal ensembles, and string quartets. Students win competitions and receive many specialist awards for their work in these activities. Students' achievement in the performing arts is outstanding.

Springwood is a very caring school and places the guidance and support it gives to its students at the centre of its work. They enable all students to make the best of the opportunities the school provides and are very much appreciated by the vast majority of students and their parents and carers. Behaviour in the school has been improved and is now good. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school since they know they are safe and staff provide for their various needs exceptionally well. Students, including those in the sixth form, respond well in lessons and participate in school and community activities very well.

The school's leaders and the outstanding governing body have reacted well to the problems raised by high staff turnover in the past. They have implemented ways to retain teachers more effectively and are providing effective training. As a result the quality of teaching is improving and most is already good, although it is only outstanding on a few occasions. In Years 7 to 11 some lessons do not contain enough opportunities for students to work independently, relate what is learnt to real-life situations, or provide enough constructive feedback through marking and dialogue in the classroom. Some of the activities in these lessons are not sufficiently challenging to ensure that the most able students maximise their learning.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding lessons in Years 7 to 11 by:
  - improving the challenge in lessons, particularly for the more able students
  - providing more opportunities for students to learn independently
  - relating what is learnt more to real-life situations
  - giving more constructive feedback to students through marking and dialogue in the classroom.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students enter the school with average attainment. As they progress through the school, they acquire knowledge, develop understanding and practise skills well and sometimes exceptionally well, especially in the specialist subjects. Lesson observations and school data show that standards are now broadly average and rising, and the quality of learning is improving securely and quickly. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson students were seen learning about the effects of different types of descriptive techniques well, and in a Year 9 design technology lesson seen working independently and learning how houses are insulated exceptionally well. Most students are keen to produce their best work and enthusiastic to learn. The progress made by girls has improved, and most boys and girls now make good progress. With the help of outstanding support and guidance, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. For example, a boy with learning and behavioural difficulties in Year 8 has made good progress in reading, spelling and handwriting with the encouragement and outstanding help of special educational needs teachers. A small minority of students enter the school after the beginning of Year 7 and normally make the same good progress as other students. Achievement has improved and is good overall.

Students make good progress in developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They reflect well on their experiences and success in acting, music and sport, and are sympathetic to other people's feelings, values and beliefs. They have a good understanding of issues to do with the environment and social affairs. Students are well aware of the history and culture of the society in which they live, and of other cultures through their many visits in this country and abroad. Students make an outstanding contribution to their community through their engagement with elderly and vulnerable people, duties they undertake in the school, and their frequent and highly regarded theatrical and music performances - attended by 29,000 people last year. Students behave well in lessons, around the school, and at break times. Students have a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives, judgements endorsed by most parents and carers. They play an active part in various schools and other councils, and fundraising for charities and other purposes. Students are currently raising a large sum of money to enable their theatrical company to go on tour in Australia for three weeks. Attendance is average. This and students' sound and improving key skills prepare them satisfactorily for the future.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

When teaching is at its best, pace and expectations are high and teachers use their knowledge of the subject to inspire students to learn. Effective questioning is used to gauge students' understanding and to judge when it is necessary to reinforce explanations. The best lessons feature a good range of teaching styles. As a result, students show considerable interest and make good progress. For example, in an additional mathematics lesson in Year 11, students were seen working independently on statistical problems set by the teacher and being inspired by her knowledge, enthusiasm and high expectations to learn well. Again in a Year 10 history lesson, students were eager to learn about the history of medicine and keen to share what they had learnt with their teacher and other students. Students enjoyed both these lessons. In the weaker lessons, limited expectations for the most able students and uninteresting dialogue between teachers and their students contributed to less effective learning. On rare occasions a few students engaged in minor misbehaviour in these weaker lessons.

The curriculum caters for both the academic and personal needs of individuals and groups well. It is well organised, imaginative and benefits considerably from the school's special status as a performing arts college. A number of art-related subjects are provided and a small minority of students receive individual and group instrumental and vocal tuition. In Years 8 and 9 students are set in English, mathematics and science. In Years 10 and 11, a core of compulsory and a good range of optional subjects at various levels are offered.

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Students are guided exceptionally well to optional subjects which suit their future needs. A small number of selected students are offered Young Apprenticeships, level 1 day-release courses and ASDAN courses; some are provided in partnership with other schools and colleges. Extensive use of learning mentors and online learning resources is made in Year 11. The curriculum includes six discrete days of personal, health and social education and work-related learning for most students. Over 100 activities are provided in drama, music and sports in addition to the normal timetabled curriculum. Gifted and talented students are supported through different timetabled activities, visits and activities outside the normal school day.

All students are known as individuals and treated according to their different needs extremely well, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has very effective pastoral arrangements and works very well with a range of outside agencies to support students facing challenging circumstances. These well-targeted arrangements make a very significant contribution to good attitudes, behaviour and the achievement of the students. One parent said, 'The special educational needs coordinator has addressed the concerns I had for my children quickly and effectively.' Another said, 'My child did not start at Springwood at the normal time, we moved to the area at the start of Year 8. I was worried this might be a problem for my child to settle in, but he was made very welcome and settled in straight away with no problems. Since then, he has flourished at Springwood, thanks to the help and support of the staff at the school.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have a clear vision of the future of the school. They have pursued improvement in the school's performance with considerable energy and commitment. Leaders at all levels now understand what needs to be done and communicate their high expectations to all staff. They regularly monitor the quality of teaching and outcomes. Planning is well focused and based on robust evidence and high quality data.

The governing body is outstanding. It plays a crucial role in challenging senior leaders and approving strategies to achieve improvement. The governing body understands the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school exceptionally well. It has recently strengthened its subcommittees in order to oversee improvement in outcomes, challenge managers more effectively, and support the staff. It places strong emphasis on treating each pupil as an individual, without any discrimination, and in giving all students the best chance to gain the most from what the school offers. It engages effectively with parents and carers and is well informed about their views. It takes great pride in the school's

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theatrical and musical achievements, which form a significant part of the school's good contribution to community cohesion in terms of local, national and international involvement. For example, it has helped a school in Australia to set up a theatre similar to its own Kinetic theatre. The school is a part of a group of collaborating secondary schools and colleges, and leads a cluster of local primary, junior and first schools. The cluster works well to ensure the smooth progress of students and shares some resources.

The school's safeguarding procedures are good and follow recommended practice. Rigorous checks are carried out on all newly appointed staff and good central records kept. Any safeguarding issues that may arise are fully investigated. The inspectors looked very carefully at how the school responded to some recent issues, and judged its systems to be effective. The school has clear policies for health and safety which are reviewed regularly. Safety checks are carried out by appropriate external authorities and any recommendations they make are acted upon quickly. Staff have been trained in child protection and regular risk assessments are taken. The school engages well with outside agencies to support the safety and well-being of its students.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

The sixth form is good. The school believes in giving all students the chance to benefit from what it offers in the sixth form. As a consequence, the prior attainment of students entering Year 12 is below average. In 2010, whilst attainment at the end of Year 13 varied it was average overall and above average in some vocational courses. Attendance is improving and retention rates are good. The progress students make and their achievement are good. The quality of teaching and assessment is good and sometimes outstanding. The relationships between teachers and students are very good. Students have good planning and organisational skills and are encouraged to learn independently



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well. Sixth form students are good role models and effective mentors for younger students. They enjoy learning and taking part in the many extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is well matched to the various needs of the students. As a result, students learn skills needed for their future careers well. They feel positive about their learning in the sixth form and develop into mature young adults. In 2010, most of those who completed their courses went on to study at universities. Leaders and managers are committed and effective. They have high expectations and effective plans for the future improvement of the sixth form.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The response of parents and carers to the questionnaire was above average. Most parents and carers support the school and say that they are happy with their child's experiences at the school. Most also say that the school keeps their children safe, an endorsement for the school's recent and effective handling of the much publicised safeguarding issues. A very small minority of parents and carers say that the school does not do enough to help their children lead a healthy lifestyle. The inspectors judged this aspect of provision to be good, and found that students have a clear awareness of the importance of healthy eating and exercise.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Springwood High 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 619 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,681 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	196	32	370	60	42	7	9	1
The school keeps my child safe	201	32	389	63	20	3	4	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	206	33	348	56	49	8	8	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	210	34	367	59	34	5	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	158	26	418	68	22	4	2	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	133	21	393	63	64	10	5	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	94	15	417	67	77	12	7	1
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)	170	27	378	61	32	5	4	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	165	27	393	63	36	6	6	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	160	26	363	59	59	10	11	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	110	18	386	62	60	10	12	2
The school is led and managed effectively	159	26	395	64	25	4	2	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	214	35	363	59	32	5	5	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



14 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Springwood High School, King's Lynn, PE30 4AW**

My colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your school and welcomed the opportunity to see you at work in your lessons. We judged your school to be good. It does most things well and some things very well indeed - for example, it helps you to progress well, provides an outstanding range of high quality theatrical and musical activities, and cares and supports you exceptionally well.

The new headteacher and other senior leaders that run your school have made many good changes to your school in the last two years. They have provided you with a new programme of lessons to make your learning more exciting and enjoyable, and have improved the quality of teaching you receive. The senior staff have resolved the difficulties due to changes in staff, and are now ready to take the school up to the next level.

In order to raise standards still further, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governing body to do the following things to help you.

Increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons in Years 7 to 11 by:

- raising the challenge you receive in lessons and relating what you learn more to real-life situations
- providing you with more opportunities to work independently and
- constructive feedback, through marking and dialogue in lessons.

I know that those who lead your school are keen to do these things and you can help them by always working hard, listening to what teachers say about how to improve, and doing your best work.

Yours sincerely

Dr Peter Thompson

Lead inspector

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