

Framingham Earl High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121163
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358947
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Abbott HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	760
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trish Judson
Headteacher	Nicola Furneaux
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2007
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement and development plan, the raising attainment plan, various school policies, the minutes of the governing body, the records of safeguarding checks, and other documents as appropriate. They held meetings with a cross-section of senior staff, middle managers, classroom teachers, teaching assistants and nine groups of students. They met with members of the governing body and the School Improvement Partner. Questionnaire responses were received from 291 parents and carers, 257 students and 62 members of staff.

Inspectors observed 31 lessons, involving 30 teachers and dropped in for short visits to several more, to check on students' behaviour, for example. Four lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also visited the learning support centre and a tutor period and spoke informally to many other students. At the time of the inspection, Year 11 students were on study leave for their GCSE examinations, so no Year 11 lessons were observed.

Information about the school

Framingham Earl High School is a smaller than average secondary school, serving a mainly rural and socially advantaged area to the south of Norwich. It has specialist status for sports and is a member of the Open Opportunity partnership of local schools and colleges, which provides a wide-ranging programme of diploma and other vocational courses at Levels 1 and 2. The school has achieved Healthy School status. In December 2009, the school was designated a Gaining Ground school, bringing it additional resources to help improve students' progress. The school exceeds the government's floor targets.

The proportion of students known to be entitled to free school meals is well below average. Nearly all students are White British and very few students are at an early stage of acquiring English. The proportion of students having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Some of these have identified behavioural, emotional and social needs.

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	2
Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	2
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- Framingham Earl High School is an effective and well-led school where every student is valued and encouraged to be creative. It is highly inclusive and goes out of its way to support vulnerable students.
- Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. They develop a strong sense of self-worth and independent-mindedness that equips them well for their future lives. They feel safe and know who to turn to when they need support.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their priorities have been to accelerate students' progress and to eliminate the underachievement affecting some groups.
- Leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching, strengthening provision in English and science and closely monitoring every student's progress.
- Achievement is good because the school now intervenes at an early stage to support students who are in danger of falling behind and its action to close any gaps in the achievement of different groups is proving successful.
- The school has some outstanding staff who model good practice in teaching and subject leadership. The great majority of teaching is now good and there is an improving trend in attainment.
- Students make good progress in most subjects and reach well-above average standards by the time they leave at age 16.
- Subject leaders are held accountable well for the effectiveness of their departments, but some variability remains.
- School improvement plans are implemented with determination, but senior leaders do not evaluate the impact of different aspects as well as they might.
- Many students and their parents and carers reported behaviour issues affecting a few lessons. This occurs because some students become restless when

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teaching is less than good.

- Students' behaviour is improving and is good overall. They engage well in lessons and display good attitudes to learning, especially when opportunities are presented by good or outstanding teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help students to make good progress and be fully engaged in learning in every lesson by further increasing the proportions of good and outstanding lessons, for example by:
 - ensuring that all lessons are designed to stretch the most able and provide support for those students who need more help to reach expected standards
 - ensuring that all teachers follow the new assessment policy so that students consistently know what they need to do to improve
 - providing further professional development, guidance and modelling of good practice for teachers whose lessons are regularly less than good
 - ensuring that subject leaders are consistently effective in securing good progress for all students.
- Improve the rigour of improvement planning by setting specific and measurable success criteria and by evaluating the impact of each aspect of the plans.

Main report

Framingham Earl High School is a good and deservedly popular school that provides a good all round education designed to nurture good citizens. Students, supported by their parents and carers demonstrate a strong commitment to punctuality and regular attendance, both at school and when they are educated off site. They develop a range of skills that equip them well for the world of work and their continuing education. Their outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community is exemplified by the high levels of participation in voluntary work and leadership roles within the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

At the time of the last inspection, in 2007, the current headteacher had only recently taken up her post. However, she was already aware that the school's strong track record was masking some emerging issues, including a degree of complacency among some staff. While standards remained above average, the school experienced a decline in students' progress that led to it being designated a Gaining Ground school in 2009. At that time, students' progress was satisfactory at best, with considerable variations among different groups. The legacy of this period is still evident, for example in parents' and carers' concerns about the less effective teaching and behaviour management that still occurs in a small minority of lessons.

To their credit, senior leaders and the governing body recognised the urgency of the situation and backed the headteacher's vision to re-establish the school's effectiveness. At first, there were a few teachers and subject leaders who did not accept the need for change. Now, the sense of ambition is palpable, driven forward

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by the personal example of senior leaders, who accurately monitor the quality of lessons and analyse the performance of each subject. Middle leaders are increasingly focused on ensuring good progress for all students, though their impact is variable. The governing body pays close attention to performance data and is rigorous in its determination to hold the school to account. For example, after the curriculum committee questioned the disappointing performance in information and communication technology, the school introduced a new course that is proving more successful.

The leadership of teaching and learning is good. School improvement groups involve a variety of staff in improving the quality of teaching and learning and supporting other aspects of school improvement. Teachers learn from each other and through whole-school professional development. Many are developing their coaching skills by working with trainees. Teaching and learning have improved considerably in English and are improving in science. Now almost all members of staff feel that the school is well led and managed and support its strategic direction. As a result, the school is improving rapidly and standards are higher than ever.

However, when senior leaders evaluate the effectiveness of school improvement work, they focus more on whether the plans have been followed, rather than whether they are having the desired effect. This is because the plans do not include enough specific and measurable success criteria. While this omission has not prevented the school from improving, it prevents the school from assessing the precise impact of different improvement actions.

The school's commitment to promoting equality and closing gaps in performance is evident in the careful analysis of the performance of different groups of students. With good support from the local authority, the school has introduced a very comprehensive system to monitor students' performance. The school sets ambitious targets for each student, based on their prior attainment. Regular assessments allow the school to identify those at risk of missing their targets and to support them through a variety of interventions. The school is currently introducing a revised marking and assessment policy, but there has not been enough time for its impact to be felt and there is still some inconsistency. In most cases, marking is regular and it provides some guidance to students on how to improve, albeit of variable quality.

When students join the school in Year 7 they are, on average, at least a term ahead of national expectations. This is why standards remained above average in 2008 and 2009, despite only satisfactory progress. Since then, better teaching and the new system to monitor students' progress have contributed to rapid improvement. Results improved considerably in 2010, but some groups continued to underperform. The school responded with targeted action. As a result, all groups are now benefiting from the general improvement in attainment and progress, so that gaps are closing between boys and girls and progress is improving for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those with low prior attainment. By linking the improved academic monitoring with good pastoral care, the school helps students with complex social and personal issues to maintain their progress. The

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learning support centre provides good support for the most vulnerable. The curriculum is kept under close review, to ensure that it meets students' needs well. For example, new vocational courses are being introduced as an alternative to diplomas.

The great majority of teaching is good or better and some is outstanding. In these lessons, teachers use probing questions to explore and extend students' understanding, and to identify misconceptions. They provide a variety of activities to cater for students' different preferred learning styles, planning carefully to meet the needs of every student. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to provide focused support for selected individuals. In many lessons, students are helped to understand assessment criteria through peer and self-assessment activities. The predominance of good teaching means that students enjoy most of their lessons and participate enthusiastically. They show good independent learning skills, such as note-taking and careful organisation of their work. They learn well from each other through discussion and group activities. They write extended responses in a variety of subjects and show perseverance, for example with mathematics problems and to improve their skills in sports. Learning and progress is therefore good or better in a large majority of lessons.

However, there are some less effective lessons in which teaching and learning are satisfactory, or very occasionally inadequate. In these lessons, the learning objectives are less clear and are less well adapted for the most-able students and those who need more help to reach expected standards. In some cases, the lesson is too teacher dominated, so that the students have little to do for extended periods and few opportunities to put forward their own ideas or to ask questions. In the small minority of less effective lessons seen during the inspection, some students stopped listening while others began to call out comments and questions, or to complain that they did not understand. While these interruptions had the disruptive effect commented upon by many parents and carers and students, they were often motivated by frustration and a desire to learn. Students told inspectors that the behaviour seen during the inspection was slightly better than normal. Directly confrontational behaviour is uncommon, as shown by the below average and decreasing use of fixed-term exclusions.

Current assessments show that all groups of students in all year groups have made better than average progress since they joined the school, especially in mathematics and English. During the inspection, students made effective use of their mathematical knowledge in a range of subjects, including physical education, food technology, science and business studies. Effective targeted work on literacy and communication was evident in humanities, modern foreign languages, work related learning and sex education. The English department is working closely with the science department to improve students' ability to express their scientific understanding in written answers. In one geography lesson, very good support was provided for a student who is at an early stage of learning English, including a bilingual vocabulary list.

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The school adopts recommended good practice across all areas of its safeguarding work and ensures that all members of staff are well trained. It works closely with other agencies to promote students' well-being and to reduce their risk of harm, so students have an accurate perspective on their own and others' safety, and clearly understand unsafe situations. Good liaison with primary partner schools ensures a smooth transition for students in Year 7.

Learning is particularly effective when real life situations are presented and key questions asked. This was illustrated during the inspection in an outstanding lesson on safer sex and relationships. The lesson also illustrated one of the school's techniques for improving teaching by modelling good practice. Two teachers combined their specialist skills from English and drama to produce a lesson involving reading, speaking and listening and role play, each learning from the other.

Students value the behaviour policy, which they helped to create and their well-being is reinforced by their good relationships with adults. Students view the school as a safe place and they are confident that there is always someone to go to for help if needed. They are typically considerate towards one another and their environment. Students are encouraged to articulate their concerns and share their views. Exclusions are a little below average. Students with identified behavioural difficulties respond well to the effective range of strategies for improving their behaviour and there are striking examples of improvement while they are at the school.

The school's excellent provision of personal, social and health education is supplemented on spiritual and moral issues by an active 'Youth for Christ' organisation, which supports pastoral issues such as depression, as well as linking with the work of the school counsellor. The school accurately records the very small number of racist incidents. It works hard to promote racial harmony and tackle discrimination and helps students to gain more knowledge and experience of the diverse communities they might find in other parts of Britain, for example through the curriculum and educational visits. Instances of bullying are rare and swift action is taken. Most students, parents and carers say that bullying is dealt with effectively. The school's proactive approach includes an anti-bullying peer counselling group 'Taboo', which has achieved national recognition through the Diana anti-bullying award. The school's work in this area has been used for community and police training and received airtime on Radio Norfolk.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Framingham Earl 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 291 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 760 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	85	29	184	63	18	6	3	1
Q2 My child feels safe at school	104	36	174	60	10	3	2	1
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	56	19	188	65	34	12	2	1
Q4 The school meets my child's particular needs	54	19	190	65	29	10	6	2
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	74	25	189	65	19	7	3	1
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	60	21	196	67	17	6	1	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	34	12	200	69	31	11	12	4
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	23	8	151	52	79	27	23	8
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	62	21	173	59	15	5	8	3
Q10 The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	14	190	65	43	15	4	1
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	61	21	156	54	45	15	12	4
Q12 The school is well led and managed	73	25	171	59	23	8	9	3

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



10 June 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Framingham Earl High School, Norwich, NR14 7QP

I am writing to tell you the outcome of your school's recent inspection. First though, on behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you all for the warm welcome we received and to thank especially those of you who gave up your time to talk to us or to complete our questionnaires.

Framingham Earl High School provides you with a good education. Your attendance is high, you enjoy learning and make good progress in most of your lessons, because they are well taught. You respect other people's views and beliefs and are considerate of their different needs. Very many of you give something back to the school and wider community, for example through voluntary work. The school has very good systems for keeping you safe. Bullying and racist incidents are rare and you are confident that the school will take effective action if they occur. The school checks regularly on how well you are getting on in each subject. This means that very few students are left behind.

The senior leaders and the governing body are ambitious for the school and for each of you. Good leadership has helped the school recover from a dip in its performance. We have suggested that the school tackles some areas where there is some inconsistency, such as the quality of teaching and assessment and the way these affect your learning and behaviour. We have also suggested some improvements to the way the school plans for improvement.

Your behaviour and attitudes are good in the great majority of lessons and most of the time around school. However, some of you lose your concentration in a few lessons, especially if you find them a bit dull. You can help yourselves by putting in extra effort and by not distracting others when this happens. On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott
Her Majesty's Inspector

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