

Attleborough High School

9 Norwich Road, Attleborough, NR17 2AJ

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- In recent years, not enough students have achieved the results of which they were capable by the time they left school. This has been the case in several subjects but especially in mathematics.
- Across the school, teaching has not been consistently good and so students have not all made as much progress as they could. Teaching has not challenged students enough or is not always matched well to the needs of all students.
- The written marking that teachers provide is not always of the same quality as their verbal comments and feedback. This means that students are sometimes unclear about how to improve their work.
- There are still instances of inadequate teaching in the school.
- The sixth form requires improvement because the number of students who continue with their studies has been below average and results are not yet high enough to represent good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching is improving very quickly because leaders carefully check teachers' work and provide good support for all members of staff.
- Students are now learning at a faster rate in lessons and their attainment is rising.
- Behaviour is good and students feel safe. They enjoy school, have very positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons.
- As a result of determined and thoughtful leadership from the headteacher, school leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done so that improvement continues.
- Governors care deeply about the school. They know how well it is doing, and they support and challenge leaders and staff to do better, including rewarding and recognising good performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons, of which eight were seen jointly with the headteacher or senior leaders. Inspectors also made several short visits to lessons and looked at students' work.
- In addition, inspectors visited the specially resourced provision on the school site which is managed by the school as part of a service agreement between the school and local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents and data about students' attainment and progress and attendance. In addition, they studied the school's development plans, self-evaluation, records of checks on teachers' work, and documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with a local authority adviser, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders and teachers who lead different subjects or areas of the school's work, and with students from each year group.
- Inspectors took account of the 77 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parental opinion. They also considered responses from the 56 members of staff who completed a questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Turner, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Yates	Additional Inspector
Susan Thomas	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students or those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special education needs is also below average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs. There are 11 students on roll. Of these, seven have learning needs and four have behavioural needs. Two are part time and attend from another school, while nine Attleborough High School pupils attend full time.
- To support their achievement in vocational qualifications, a number of students attend alternative provision on a part-time basis. They study at City College, The Hewett School, Easton College, Norfolk Training Services, The Hair Academy, Notre Dame High School and Wayland Skills Centre.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is good or better throughout the school, especially in mathematics, and raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - work is always matched to the needs of all groups of students, and that it is challenging enough so that students have plenty of opportunity to tackle higher-level work and difficult questions
 - all work is marked and assessed regularly and that all marking gives students clear guidance on how to improve their work and reach higher standards
 - all students are given opportunities to respond to their teachers' marking
 - making sure that staff learn from the examples of good and outstanding teaching so that all lessons are as engaging, interesting and motivating as the best.
- Ensure that sixth form students are given clear guidance and support so that they are all enrolled on courses appropriate to their needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- By the time they leave school, the number of students who achieve five or more good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is broadly average. Although results have been improving, students are still not all making as much progress as they could.
- Overall, students are now making progress which is near to that expected by the time they leave school but it has not always been like this. In recent years, they did not learn as well or as quickly as they should have done, especially in mathematics and in some other subjects, including science and languages.
- Although the rate of learning is improving quickly for students across the different year groups, there are still examples of students not making enough progress in lessons, though these are now fewer. This tends to happen when work is not hard enough or students' learning is not closely checked in order to help them take their next steps.
- Students' achievement in English has been mostly good in recent years. Students usually join the school with broadly average attainment in English but learn quickly and, by the time they leave, their progress in English compares very favourably with that found nationally. The results for students who took English GCSE in 2012 represented especially good achievement because of these students' lower attainment when they joined the school.
- Students' mathematical skills are now developing effectively. In lessons, students normally apply mathematical rules correctly. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson about photosynthesis, students enjoyed the challenge of undertaking GCSE data work when they learned how to find patterns in results and studied the effects of different temperatures and conditions on rates of plant growth.
- The school has made very little use of early entry for GCSE. Only a very small number of students were entered in the mathematics GCSE in Year 10 and they were given the opportunity to retake the exam to improve their grades.
- Students' literacy skills develop well across several subjects and, when the opportunities are provided, students write expressively and in a well-structured way. This is especially so in English and humanities. In a Year 11 English lesson, students wrote outstanding pieces about the ways in which racism is portrayed and characters are developed in the story *Of Mice and Men*. Opportunities are still occasionally missed in some lessons to support the development of writing skills.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs now make at least the progress they should, and this is an improvement on recent years. Those with a statement of special educational needs and those in the specialist resource base make good progress because of the effective support they receive, including individual or group teaching which is closely matched to their needs. They are also able to participate more fully in school life and are supported to take part in physical education lessons which are specially designed for their needs. These approaches help to narrow gaps in their attainment.
- The attainment of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is improving. In 2012, these students were the equivalent of around six months behind their classmates in English and close to a year behind in mathematics. The gap between their progress and that of other students is closing. The use of the pupil premium to support their achievement has been

focused on literacy and numeracy and the school's leaders can demonstrate how these approaches have worked. Special funding to help pupils who are behind when they join Year 7 has been used to help these pupils to make, good progress and to catch up on their literacy and numeracy skills.

- Vocational courses are offered to numbers of Year 10 and 11 students in order to support their learning. They attend other schools and colleges on a part-time basis to study for these qualifications and their progress and care are supported effectively. As a result, their progress has improved in the last two years and is now in line with expectations.
- The attainment and progress of students in the sixth form has improved in the last three years and they are learning more quickly than in the past. Where their attainment was below that seen nationally, they have closed the gaps in terms of final results and are now making the progress they should in most subjects. The drop out rate for courses has been too high because entry requirements have been too low for some courses and students have not previously been given enough guidance on their sixth form choices.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has clearly improved since the previous inspection but, over time, it has not been effective enough to help the students to make the good progress of which they are capable. It has lacked consistency across a range of subjects. This is now changing and improvement is happening quickly.
- The majority of teaching is now good. Some teaching is also outstanding but a proportion still requires improvement. There is still a small amount of inadequate teaching. This variation in teaching quality is why teaching is not yet good overall.
- The remaining, less effective teaching does not challenge students enough. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long or set work which fails to capture the interest of the students. Work is still not always matched closely to the needs of different groups, and opportunities are missed for teachers to check on students' learning. As a result, students in these lessons are not as engaged in their learning and they sometimes misunderstand what they are being taught.
- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to stretch the thinking of some students through questioning. They do not always check on their progress or consider ways in which they could avoid simple misunderstandings which limit their learning.
- Teachers' marking of students' work varies in its effectiveness. There are some examples of good marking in and across some departments. Here, comments identify the strengths and weaknesses in students' learning. Students know how to improve as a result, and their later work shows that they have followed their teachers' advice, especially when teachers specifically ask them to respond to comments. Equally, there are examples where written feedback is not helpful enough or takes place irregularly, and where students do not follow the advice they are given.
- The majority of lessons are well planned, challenging and interesting. This is because most teachers make good use of information about what students can already do to plan lessons and set work which helps them to make better progress. Teaching normally catches students' interest quickly and then they remain engaged throughout the lesson and enjoy learning. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson, students were challenged to work out how sound is transmitted and received by making their own functioning telephones. They rapidly learned to use the correct vocabulary to explain their findings.

- Questioning is used well in most lessons and students are challenged to think for themselves and offer ideas rather than simply recall things they have recently been told.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those who attend the specialist resource base, are normally well supported with personalised help and teaching. There are examples, however, where whole-class teaching lacks the close match to their needs which is found in most lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In lessons, students' attitudes to learning are rarely less than good and there are examples of exemplary behaviour across a range of subjects. Students are keen to join in and do so with enthusiasm, normally concentrating and working hard. Nearly all students make the most of the opportunities they are offered to learn actively and use their time well. On just a few occasions, they need direction from their teachers to prevent their attention wandering.
- Around the school, students behave sensibly and are courteous and polite to visitors and each other. In lessons, they listen and work together well and show high levels of respect and consideration for others. It is untypical to see teachers having to direct such behaviour.
- Students feel safe at this school. Every pupil asked has a clear awareness of risks associated with use of the internet and other situations which can be challenging, including social networking sites.
- Students do not believe bullying is a problem and, on those rare occasions when it occurs, they are confident in approaching staff for help and know that any problems will be tackled effectively. There have been no recorded racist incidents at the school in recent years.
- Students' attendance has improved since the previous inspection when it was below average. It is now average. The school has been determined and sensitive in its work with students and their families to achieve a lower rate of absence.
- Students take pride in the active role they play around school. They can provide examples of improvements they have introduced when working with school leaders. In addition, they are very appreciative of the helpful advice that is provided to any student who needs guidance.
- Parents normally have the same confidence as students about the good behaviour and safety within the school.
- Students' good behaviour has come about as a result of consistent approaches to promoting positive relationships across the school. Teachers and leaders communicate high expectations regarding standards of behaviour and respect between all pupils, regardless of backgrounds. This ensures that any potential for discrimination is tackled effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- Effective leadership has successfully guided very important improvements since the previous inspection. The headteacher has been determined in driving continuous school improvement and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior team.

- Senior leaders have been able to set out a decisive vision for improvement which has earned the overwhelming support of staff. As a result, the quality of teaching and students' achievement are improving quickly.
- Leaders have carefully assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the school since the previous inspection and developed an effective system for finding out about how well students are taught, how well they achieve and what is required to improve things further. Regular checks on teachers' work and students' progress help leaders at all levels to set the school's priorities.
- As a result of regular checks on the progress of students, leaders are able to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to be helped with their learning and achievement.
- Good systems for observing lessons mean that teachers normally receive accurate and supportive advice from senior leaders. In addition, staff training is relevant for them and the school. Senior leaders invest in good training for teachers who need to improve as well as for the general development of all staff. Teachers are encouraged increasingly to lead their own in-house developments through the school's popular 'teaching and learning communities'.
- Senior staff and governors have set challenging targets for teachers' performance and improvement. The headteacher makes sure that teachers' pay is linked to their performance and to students' achievement.
- Teachers responsible for leading subjects and the progress made by students, work well as a team and take a great deal of responsibility for school improvement. They are committed to upholding the headteacher's vision for the school and are effective role models for the staff in their departments. They know the school well, in terms of its strengths and remaining areas for improvement. They are working hard to improve numeracy across the curriculum to the same level as literacy in order to boost achievement in mathematics.
- The curriculum is effective and well planned. It offers a range of subjects and topics which support students' achievement and is generally well matched to their needs. Advice on sixth form options has improved this year in a bid to ensure that students make appropriate choices and so that fewer drop out without completing the course. Leaders recognise the importance of maintaining and building on this improvement.
- Increasingly, there are more opportunities for students to practise literacy and numeracy skills in real-life situations. More students also have the opportunity to take vocational courses by arrangement with other schools and colleges.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has developed many more opportunities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its students. They are very much acquainted with the changes that have taken place in Britain and the school has made links with schools in different parts of the country and overseas.
- Partnership with parents is much improved and parents demonstrate greater confidence in the school than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders regularly check on the achievement of students educated in the resource base and maintain regular links with it. The base is well led and managed by a specialist leader who has a precise understanding of the needs of the students who attend. He has regular contact with families and offers an engaging and successful curriculum to ensure that students attend and achieve well.

- The local authority has provided effective advice to the school and supported senior leaders in improving their skills and making judgements which help them know the school's strengths and areas which that need improvement. As a result, school leaders have been able to bring about positive changes in the quality of teaching and achievement since the previous inspection.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good. The Chair of the Governing Body and the wider team know the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. They are deeply committed and closely involved in school improvement planning as well as being effectively linked to different areas and working beside leaders at various levels. They ask searching questions about students' performance and the quality of teaching. As a result, they have a clear awareness about the school's performance compared with other schools which helps them to support leaders and also hold them to account. In addition, they have an accurate view of the remaining priorities for improvements in teaching and students' achievement. Governors hold the headteacher to account through challenging performance targets. Their knowledge of how teachers' performance is managed is very thorough and well informed by their links with different areas of the school. They are well aware of how additional government funding for students eligible for the pupil premium is used to support literacy and achievement, and the progress these students are making as a result. They are also vigilant in their oversight of students' welfare and safeguarding arrangements, which meet all requirements.

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	121167
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	406002

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	961
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frances Harrod
Headteacher	Neil McShane
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2011
Telephone number	01953 452335
Fax number	01953 456817
Email address	office@attleboroughhigh.norfolk.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

