

Springwood High School

Queensway, Gaywood, King's Lynn, PE30 4AW

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a rapidly improving school. The drive, passion and determination of the headteacher and his team have made a visible impact on all aspects of the school's work.
- Dedicated teachers work extremely hard to ensure that students make good progress, behave well in lessons, and have excellent opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Through well-targeted spending of the extra money provided, the school is closing the gap that existed between the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium and that of other students.
- Teaching is largely good with some that is outstanding. A minority requires improvement.
- The sixth form is good. Results are improving sharply. Leaders are showing more ambition and therefore more students are achieving the highest grades.
- The school is a welcoming, lively and friendly place. Behaviour and attendance are improving all the time and relationships between staff and students are warm and mutually respectful. Students work together in harmony, especially in the amazing concert band and they support each other well.
- Students say they feel safe in school.
- Students show a genuine thirst for learning. They are optimistic and positive about their education and the opportunities they are given to excel in extra-curricular activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons teachers do not push the students hard enough and students are not given time to think deeply and explore ideas at a high level.
- The quality of marking, although improving is inconsistent.
- The track record of improvement in the main school started later in the sixth form and is only now beginning to show a positive impact.
- Students do not have enough chance to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons, including six joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed tutor time, assembly, breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with groups of students across the age and ability range to discuss achievement, teaching, behaviour, safety and improvements in the school. They also met with groups of students who had recently left the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and groups of teachers.
- They spoke by phone with the Chair of the Governing Body and met with another governor.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to the school’s questionnaire for parents.
- Inspectors checked the school’s records of attainment and progress, the school’s self-evaluation, lesson monitoring documents and teachers’ performance management records. They also looked at the school’s figures for attendance and exclusion, safeguarding and child protection records, behaviour records and the minutes from governing body meetings. They also evaluated the ways in which the school checks the quality of teaching and the plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Alan Lee	Additional Inspector
David Webster	Additional Inspector
Judith Gooding	Additional Inspector
Ahmed Marikar	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Springwood High School is larger than the average-sized secondary school. There are more girls than boys. The school has a large sixth form.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is a little above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the pupil premium is a little below average but rising sharply.
- A very small number of students attend part-time courses in motor mechanics and horse care away from the school site.
- The overwhelming majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion from other ethnic groups is lower than average but is increasing.
- The proportion of students who speak a first language other than English is below average but is rising.
- 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 an even greater proportion of teaching is consistently good or better, particularly in the sixth form by:
 - planning challenging work for more-able students
 - allowing more time in lessons for students to think deeply and explore ideas
 - making more opportunities for the promotion of literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects
 - making sure that there is a consistent approach to marking and that teachers see that students follow their advice about how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- GCSE results have risen sharply over recent years. The proportion of students gaining five GCSE passes at grade C or above including English and mathematics is above the national average. Students make significantly better progress from their starting points than students in other schools, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Students make good progress in the majority of lessons because teaching is confident and the lessons proceed at a brisk pace. In some lessons, especially in the sixth form, more-able students are insufficiently challenged.
- Pupil-premium funding is used effectively to support eligible students. Students eligible for pupil premium funding in 2012 were only a little more than half as likely to gain higher-level GCSE passes in English and mathematics than other students. The school's monitoring information shows the gaps narrowing considerably.
- Results in the sixth form are improving, particularly in Year 13, and more students are achieving higher grades and seeking places at top universities.
- The school has rightly recognised that good examination results depend on good attendance and has worked to improve attendance for all students. This is having a significantly positive impact on students' achievement.
- The school has a policy of entering some students early for GCSE mathematics. This process is carefully thought through and students are still required to make at least expected progress. Many more-able students do well in GCSE mathematics and go on to excel in mathematics at GCE A level. Former students told inspectors that mathematics was their favourite subject in the sixth form because it was 'full of challenge'.
- Most groups of students such as more-able students and those students with special educational needs supported at school action plus make as much progress as other students. However, students eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium do not attain as highly as other students. School leaders have identified this as a top priority and are taking steps to improve progress for these students.
- The very few students who attend courses off-site make good progress. The school has re-organised its work-related provision so that more of the courses are based in school. For example, there is a hair and beauty studio where students can take a professional qualification. This has increased students motivation and achievement across their range of subjects.
- Those students supported through the Year 7 catch-up premium are making rapid progress in both English and mathematics.
- Students are articulate and are all able to express themselves and give extended answers when required. They are encouraged to read, although some former Year 11 students commented that the GCSE English literature course interfered with the enjoyment of reading because 'you focus on parts of a book rather than the whole story'.

The quality of teaching is good

- Parents, carers and students say that teaching is good. Just over two thirds of teaching seen by inspectors, in exceptionally hot conditions in the last full week of the academic year was judged as at least good. Teachers and students are to be commended for the high level of learning taking place.
- Teaching results in very positive relationships between teachers and students. This

enables learning to proceed at a good pace.

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally promoted well by teachers; for example in a Year 10 history lesson where students reflected on the beliefs of people from different countries or a 'wow' moment in a Year 12 mathematics lesson as students individually discovered the power of the 'chain method'.
- There is clear evidence that many teachers have developed well as a result of the school's training. For example, at least one outstanding lesson was observed that was delivered by a recently qualified teacher who spoke positively about the way the school had supported her in learning how to teach very effectively.
- Students work well either individually, in pairs or in groups. They are able to work independently without too much teacher intervention.
- Assessment is generally used well, but there are some inconsistencies in the amount and quality of marking. While marking is regular, it sometimes lacks precise details of next steps for improvement. The quality of marking varies by teacher rather than by subject. The school has identified the need to tighten further the monitoring of marking.
- Teaching assistants are usually used effectively to support students' learning.
- Some good examples were seen of the promotion of literacy in subjects other than English, for example in French and art lessons. However, the promotion of literacy is not consistent and marking to promote literacy is inconsistent across subjects. A new whole-school literacy initiative is being launched from September. Similarly, some good examples were seen of the promotion of numeracy in subjects other than mathematics, but not enough is done to promote both literacy and numeracy.
- In weaker lessons, teachers use questioning to check that some students know the right answer, but not effectively enough to ensure students make good progress. They do not always include enough lower-ability students in the questioning. Teachers do not use enough questions that need more than a single word answer, so questions do not challenge students enough.
- In the sixth form the majority of lessons are good, and some are excellent such as in business and mathematics. Highly qualified teachers have very strong subject knowledge and really inspire their students. However, there is less consistency than in the main school.
- Some sixth form lessons have a slow pace, are too dominated by the teacher and are not adapted to meet the needs of students of different abilities. In these lessons students are not challenged. There is on-going work to eradicate uninspiring lessons and make sure that the same rigour in the quality of teaching found in the main school is extended to the sixth form.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the school, in corridors, at lunchtime and at the end of the day is very good. Students are friendly, courteous and helpful. The school is a happy place where students get on well together.
- Attitudes to learning are positive and any low-level disruption in lessons is rare. Parental questionnaires issued by the school indicate that parents are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and safety.
- Students feel safe at school. They have a good awareness of how to remain safe, through assemblies and presentations from visitors including the police on topics such as cyber-bullying and other e-safety issues. They have been well briefed on reporting any concerns over visitors on site to staff.

- Attendance, although below average over the last three years, has improved steadily. The school has been rigorous in tackling absence through, for example, first day texting, regular liaison with a range of agencies, and tailored strategies to support individual pupils and their families. It has also introduced awards for good attendance, and broadened curriculum choice through additional work-related courses making school more attractive.
- The school uses effective strategies to reduce exclusions and internal isolation. This includes specialist provision for those at risk of falling behind academically or becoming socially isolated. Leaders have also put in place intervention programmes to tackle low reading ages, poor self-confidence and anger management and self-management skills, all of which are successful in helping students get back on track to make good progress.
- Instances of bullying and racist incidents are infrequent. Pupils have a very good awareness of different forms of bullying through assemblies and coverage of this topic in the curriculum. They regard bullying as rare and are very confident that any instances will be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Students were also actively involved in the development of the school behaviour policy.
- Management of behaviour by staff is consistent and clear. A changed pastoral structure which allows more effective tracking of behaviour as well as academic achievement, the 'Attitudes to Learning' programme, and a clear rewards and consequences system, have resulted in further improved standards of behaviour.
- The development of the 'house system' has considerably increased the opportunities for students to assume responsibilities within the school and students have responded well.
- Staff are aware of the needs of vulnerable students and put effective strategies in place for them. As a result there have been marked improvements in achievement for students with behavioural needs.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because attendance is below average and sometimes pupils' behaviour falls below the school's high expectations.

The leadership and management

■ are good

- The Governors and headteacher have a vision for the school which other leaders and staff share. Governors work closely with senior leaders and departments to initiate and monitor change. Governors and leaders have a firm understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. For example, during joint observations with inspectors leaders were accurate in their analysis of lessons. School leaders are ambitious. They want the school to become outstanding and they are doing the right things to achieve this.
- Teaching has improved sharply because of effective leadership and management. There is rigorous management of teachers' performance and planned training closely matched to the needs of the school. Teachers' progress up the salary scale is linked to their performance.
- Senior leaders have dedicated much time and thought to developing effective systems to track progress and improve teaching. Senior leaders check teaching and the work of subject leaders. The school has changed its management structure so that senior leaders are helping other leaders to bring about improvement.
- Although other leaders all subscribe to the headteacher's vision for the school, until recently there was some inconsistency in their performance. There have been significant changes to the leadership team and their responsibilities so that the task of school improvement can be shared more widely.

- Students are given opportunities to explore their spiritual, moral, social and cultural abilities through a wide range of popular activities such as sport, music and drama. The headteacher believes that foreign travel is an important element in developing students' understanding of life beyond West Norfolk. One result is that students are more ambitious in applying for popular universities. The school organises a range of activities to promote students' understanding of careers and alternative post-16 courses.
- The school's curriculum has a choice of courses that meets the needs of students of different abilities. As a result students are ambitious whether following a traditional A level route in the sixth form and applying to the most selective universities or following a work-related course in Key Stage 4 and gaining management qualifications in for example hair and beauty.
- The sixth form has improved since the previous Ofsted inspection. It is currently in a state of transition with a new leadership team taking up their roles in September. Former students are very positive about their sixth form experience. The checking of the provision in individual subjects is less clear than in the main school. This results in greater variation.
- School leaders make effective use of the pupil-premium funding to improve the progress of students entitled to additional support. Additional teaching hours are funded to improve skills in reading and writing for these students.
- All safeguarding procedures are adhered to and statutory requirements are met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are well informed and have been forceful in challenging leaders to do better and in accelerating actions to bring about improvement. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses as a result of training in understanding information about the school. They regularly and formally monitor the quality of their linked subject departments producing written reviews. The Governors hold to account the headteacher and senior leaders in their management of resources. They offer loyal and steadfast support when needed, but are courageous when asking challenging questions about teaching and achievement. Governors are well informed about the achievement of students and demonstrate a good understanding of current measures of attainment and progress. They know about the management of teachers' performance, how the school rewards good teachers and tackles any underperformance. They have a good understanding of issues regarding the safeguarding of students. They have all received training in child protection. Governors are very active in making sure that the school offers good value for money, including the effective use of the pupil premium to secure good progress.

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	136515
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	423087

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1637
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Livesey
Headteacher	Andrew Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	
Telephone number	01553 773393
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