

# North Walsham High School

Spenser Avenue, North Walsham, NR28 9HZ

**Inspection dates** 16–17 July 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Over time, teaching has not been consistently good across a wide range of subjects and in both key stages. As a result, students have not made good progress to prepare them well for the next stage of life.
- Groups of students, particularly the disabled and those who have special educational needs, have not made progress similar to other groups of students in the school, placing them at a further disadvantage when they leave school.
- Some adults have not had high enough expectations of what students can achieve.
- Students do not have enough opportunity to find things out for themselves or to work independently.
- Not all teachers make full use of information about students' prior learning to plan activities that are properly matched to their abilities.
- Marking remains an area of concern following the previous inspection. Students are not clear about what they need to do to improve their work and do not have the time to respond to teachers' comments, which slows progress.
- Recent changes in leadership and management are too recent to have had sufficient impact on the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Governors are not yet sufficiently involved in the management of teachers' performance and in driving improvements in the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- English, mathematics and science are led well. Teachers have high expectations, good subject knowledge and teaching is now consistently good.
- Well-targeted support is producing rapid progress for students in English and mathematics, particularly for those eligible to receive the pupil premium.
- Students feel safe in school.
- The school is calm and purposeful. Students are keen to learn. They behave well in lessons and around the school showing courtesy and respect. Many act as role models to others.
- The school's international award status provides rich experiences for students to grow in spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Students develop good values and relationships are strong.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons. Four of these observations were completed jointly with the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed breaks, lunchtimes and attended registration and assemblies.
- Discussions were held with students, staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the acting headteacher, the headteacher, senior and other leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of 41 responses to staff questionnaires and letters received from parents and carers.
- A wide range of documents was examined, including samples of students' work, pupil-progress and tracking information, the school's development plan, the school's view of itself, reports from governors, a report from the local authority, behaviour logs, case studies and safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors listened to students read and observed support lessons.

## Inspection team

Sherry Gladwin, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Susan Cox	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Pentlow	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Asker	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of students are White British. The proportion of students from ethnic minorities is well below average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school works in partnership with an external provider for work-related courses known as the East Anglian Group for Industrial Training.
- The school has undergone recent restructuring in leadership and management. The substantive headteacher has been unwell for some time. She is now on a phased return to work and was in school during the inspection. The school is led by the acting headteacher until the end of the summer term 2013.

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

- Improve teaching for all groups of students, especially disabled students and those who have special educational needs, so that they make at least good progress in a wide range of subjects by making sure that:
  - high expectations are held by all adults and that the good practice already present in some departments is shared
  - teachers plan lessons making good use of information about students' progress and learning activities are well matched to students' abilities
  - learning activities provide greater opportunities for students to find things out for themselves and develop independent learning skills
  - marking is consistently good across all subjects, students are clear about what they need to do to improve their work and teachers give students time to respond to marking to speed up progress.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
  - leaders check teaching and learning and students' progress systematically and robustly to sustain improvements in English and mathematics and secure good progress across a wide range of other subjects
  - governors are more involved in the management of teachers' performance and in challenging the school's progress towards achieving the targets set out in the school development plan.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Over time, students have not achieved well across a wide range of subjects. Lower-than-expected examination results, particularly in Year 11 work-related subjects in 2012, mean that students are not prepared well for the next stage in life and their options are reduced when they leave school.
- Recent initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise achievement have started to bring about good improvements. School information shows that Year 11 students are better placed this year to complete their courses and are on course to achieve better results in a wide range of subjects.
- In 2012, students attending alternative provision did not make good progress as a result of uneven provision and poor attendance by students. The school did not keep a close enough check on how well these students were doing, placing them at a disadvantage.
- The attainment in English and mathematics of students eligible for the pupil premium has lagged behind that of others in the school for some time. In 2012 students were a GCSE grade behind in both English and mathematics. This situation has been tackled directly, and these students are making better progress. They are now roughly three fifths of a grade behind the others.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not make good progress, particularly those supported at school action plus. The school has begun to address this issue for this significant group of learners. Provision is improving and students are beginning to make closer to expected progress.
- The school has small numbers of minority ethnic students and those who speak English as an additional language. The numbers are too small to be statistically significant.
- When students join the school their attainment is below average. Over time, the quality of teaching has been inconsistent so that students' progress is variable. More recently, consistently good teaching in English and mathematics is leading to better progress.
- In 2012, students made good progress and achieved broadly average standards in the proportion reaching five A\* to C grades. They made good progress in English and mathematics, particularly among those students eligible for the pupil premium. This improvement is on course to be sustained as school information shows similar results are expected in 2013.
- The quality of reading is improving as a result of a new online reading initiative. Good investment in this new reading scheme supports reading well. Those who find reading challenging are supported through effective additional support that builds skills and confidence and improves their reading ages.
- Students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium in English are developing literacy skills more appropriate for their age as a result of the support they receive. Advanced readers are now encouraged through the development of a higher-ability reading club to stretch their skills.
- Some students are entered early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. Changes to the curriculum mean that the early-entry policy is generally helpful to more-able students, who

can take their learning of the subject involved to a higher level. Those who do not attain the results expected are required to continue with these courses to improve their results and achieve the highest grade possible.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Over time teaching has not been consistently good in all subjects and key stages. Therefore it has been unable to support consistently good progress for students. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve and do not plan lessons with information about students' performance in mind to create learning activities which challenge students and match their abilities.
- However, there is now more consistently good teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. The school understands that the strong practice in English should be shared and has started to do this through its weekly training programme for staff to tackle underperformance in subjects that have been less effective over time.
- The school is making use of the local outstanding teachers' programme to accelerate improvements in teaching. Students explained that learning could be made more interesting through the use of interactive learning opportunities and practical experiences so that they did more than "listen and write, listen and write" as one pupil told inspectors.
- Marking is not consistently good. This was an area for development at the previous inspection. While it has been a focus for the school and marking is now completed regularly by most teachers, teachers do not mark consistently well. They do not make sure that students are clear about what they need to do to improve their work and they do not always require them to respond to comments in their books.
- A lack of follow-through on whether or not students respond to marking means that opportunities to deepen learning are lost. In some areas of the school marking is completed very well. Where this occurs students' progress speeds up.
- Opportunities for students to work independently and find things out for themselves are limited as much learning is teacher-led and dominated by question and answer. A good example of some independent learning was seen in a Year 10 English lesson on the William Golding novel, 'Lord of the Flies'. Students worked in small groups to create a speaking and listening piece, exploring the author's intention in a part of the text. Students responded with creativity, enjoyment and excitement and produced thoughtful pieces of work. They then assessed each other's work in a helpful manner.
- Recent re-organisation of teaching assistants has resulted in teachers and teaching assistants working more closely together to plan catch-up classes that support those students falling behind.
- In addition, teaching assistants are now supporting the learning of disabled students and those who have special educational needs well. They were observed regularly checking students' understanding and progress to provide timely and effective support. This is helping to improve progress in English and mathematics. The recently improved individual learning plans for disabled students and those who have special educational is helping staff to plan lessons more carefully.
- Classrooms are positive places to learn because teachers listen to students, value their

contributions and ask questions that stimulate discussion, generate reflection and deepen learning. Students respond well and show that they are keen to learn.

- The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is improving. The introduction of rigorous tracking of students' progress five times a year since last September identifies students requiring extension activities, or additional support. Enrichment activities and targeted support are provided during the school day and after school.
- Teachers possess good subject knowledge. In the best lessons they use this to good effect to plan engaging lessons as was observed in Year 10 in English. Teachers developed students' understanding of writing techniques used to create tension, and used visual stimuli to inspire some creative writing.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Over time, behaviour has improved. Staff and students report that behaviour is better and this is recognised in the fall in fixed term and permanent exclusions noted in the school's records. There is a well thought-through, clear and stepped behaviour policy. Rigorous systems help manage behaviour consistently well. The school works effectively with external agencies to support families whose children show challenging behaviour.
- Students' attitudes in learning are positive. They enjoy coming to school and want to do well. They listen well in lessons and offer good responses to teachers' questions to show that they can recall earlier learning. Behaviour in and around the school is good and there is little disruption to lessons.
- Students are courteous and respectful. They are happy, enjoy coming to school and feel safe in school. There is a good sense of community promoted by positive relationships between adults and students. The house system also helps to create unity. Students co-operate well with teachers and other adults working in the school to create an orderly, calm and purposeful working environment that is generally free from bullying and unkindness.
- Students know about different types of bullying, such as cyber, racist and homophobic bullying. When these occur students say they are dealt with effectively by staff. Students understand right and wrong as seen in a lesson which explored the novelist William Golding's ideas concerning good and evil. The well planned safety day which took place during the inspection for Year 8 students is a good example of how students are encouraged to develop a range of protective practices.
- Students value the school's rewards system. It motivates them to learn, behave well and attend school regularly. Attendance is lower than average and has been low for some time but it is improving. The pupil premium funding is used to improve the attendance of eligible students.
- Good use of the pupil premium to employ a family worker is paying dividends because good relationships are being formed with families and barriers to learning are reducing. For instance, improved attendance for vulnerable groups is resulting in better progress and completion of Key Stage 4 courses.
- Students have many opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities in the school and develop confidence and good self-esteem. For instance, they can become a prefect or house captain, a duty mentor, student adviser or be a member of the school council. Students take these roles seriously and act as role models for others. Students also participate in, and enjoy a

wide range of extra-curricular provision including visits, after-school sports and arts clubs, and enrichment days. The school's international award status helps to promote a good level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in students.

- The school recognises the need to raise students' aspirations and it has begun a series of visits to universities including the University of East Anglia, Oxford and Cambridge. Some work with parents to raise aspirations and develop basic skills is an aspect governors are discussing.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Inconsistent standards in teaching and learning resulted in students not making expected progress over a wide range of subjects at Key Stage 4 in 2012. Current school leaders and managers have worked over the past year to extend the improvements seen in English and mathematics to other subjects. The school has demonstrated that it is now able to get more from its students.
- The school has faced significant staffing challenges this year with the absence of the headteacher. The acting headteacher and the newly restructured senior team have accurately identified key points for improvement in the school development plan and put appropriate strategies in a place to improve standards in teaching and learning. For instance, the tracking of students' progress introduced in autumn 2012 is beginning to help hold staff accountable. Early signs are positive but the many new initiatives require time to have a positive impact.
- The school's systems to check progress towards achieving the targets set out in the school development plan are not yet sufficiently robust and rigorous. Governors are only now becoming more involved in the drive to secure higher standards in teaching and learning and in raising achievement. The local authority has worked with the school to strengthen leadership and management at all levels through joint lesson observation and learning walks.
- A quarter of parents responding to the Parent View questionnaire indicated that they did not feel that their children were taught well. Inspectors requested additional information that the school might have in relation to a wider set of responses from parents. Some parents voiced concerns that their children were not always well cared for and one parent wrote to inspectors to voice concerns that pupils with medical needs were not always attended to as expected. Inspectors found that procedures were in place to provide first aid and make sure those with medical conditions were looked after.
- Although the school has well thought-through policies, in practice it does not always promote equality of opportunity because groups of students do not make good progress, particularly disabled students and those who have special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium.
- Recently the local authority has been able to work constructively with the school to help improve the quality of teaching in English and mathematics and this is taking effect.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has experienced significant changes in composition over the last year but it is now more stable. Both the Chair of Governors and the Vice-Chair of Governors are new to their roles. Governors are very committed to the school and have high ambition for its success. They are supported well by the local authority but have not been sufficiently involved in managing teachers' performance. Governors bring a range of skills to the school's leadership and management and they use these to help improve teaching and learning. They

are familiar with the school's information on students' progress but have not challenged senior leaders enough on the drive to bring about improvement. They can account for the spending of the pupil premium although the impact of strategies used to raise achievement has not been checked. They are not clear about how the school rewards good teachers. They know how it tackles underperformance. Safeguarding arrangements meet 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121154
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	412762

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	738
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Morse
<b>Headteacher</b>	Caroline Brooker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01692 402581
<b>Fax number</b>	01692 500643
<b>Email address</b>	office@northwalshamhigh.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

