

Wymondham High Academy

Folly Road, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0QT

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal, governors and the trust have a shared vision for the school that is based upon high aspirations for its pupils. Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils continue to make good and improving progress.
- Governors are professional and knowledgeable. They have a clear understanding of the school's priorities and they hold school leaders to account for their performance.
- Pupils' attainment is well above average. The proportion of pupils who attain strong passes in both English and mathematics, and the subjects that form the English Baccalaureate, is high and rose further in 2017.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students' attainment is consistently high and they make progress that is well above average. Study programmes are rich and the proportions of students who leave the sixth form to attend university are high.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use this to identify and focus on the right priorities for development, and rigorously monitor the success of their improvement plans.
- Support for pupils' next steps in education or towards employment, including careers information, advice and guidance, is very effective.
- Behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful. Their enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their high levels of attendance and their punctuality to lessons.
- The quality of teaching is good and it has improved since the previous inspection. However, not all teachers consistently challenge the most able pupils in lessons.
- The progress, attendance and behaviour of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not as good as their peers.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching consistently meets the needs of the most able pupils.
- Continue to reduce the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally by:
 - ensuring that teachers continue to plan more effectively to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is monitored closely
 - routinely reviewing the use of pupil premium funding to ensure that it provides effective support for disadvantaged pupils so they make the best possible progress.
- Embed strategies to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they make similar progress to all pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Embed strategies to reduce rates of absence, persistent absence and fixed-term exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Following the previous inspection, leaders have accurately identified areas the school needed to improve. Leaders have acted decisively and robustly. The impact of their actions has led pupils' attainment, which has been historically high, to rise further in 2017. Pupils' progress has also improved and is now in line with the national average. Attainment and progress in the sixth form have risen rapidly and are well above average.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are proud of their achievements but they are also very clear about what they need to do to continue to improve the school. The Academy Improvement Plan is rooted in leaders' accurate self-evaluation and it clearly sets out what actions need to be taken. Leaders monitor progress towards their targets rigorously and on a regular basis.
- The principal leads by example. Procedures to manage the performance of staff are applied effectively and systematically to ensure that pupils receive high-quality teaching and that staff are held to account for pupils' performance. Additional support and training is provided to help staff to develop their practice, including for example weekly professional development sessions for all teachers.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum is met. There is a strong moral purpose underpinning curriculum planning and leaders do what they believe is best for their pupils. The majority of pupils follow a core academic curriculum as leaders demonstrate that this provides them with a strong foundation for additional and further study.
- Pupils study a wide range of courses at key stage 3. Most pupils study English, mathematics, science, a modern foreign language and history or geography at key stage 4, alongside additional courses they have chosen. Leaders are committed to the study of courses outside of the compulsory GCSE subjects and they have maintained a wide variety of additional option choices for pupils.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils and set them challenging targets. Leaders at all levels review pupils' progress regularly and ensure that additional support is put in place for pupils, where necessary.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is supported effectively through 'Communications' and 'Culture' lessons, whole-day activities, the tutorial programme and assemblies. Pupils' development is also supported through the many ambassadorial roles open to them, such as the Principal's Council, and through the school's curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Recently qualified teachers are well supported by school leaders. They are provided with good advice from their mentors and they receive high-quality training. They enjoy working at the school.
- Middle leaders comment positively on the current leadership. They identify that senior leaders provide clarity, set high expectations and are consistent in the way they work with staff. Meetings with senior leaders are rigorous and focused upon department and

school improvement priorities.

- Raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities remains a priority for school leaders. Enhancements to pupil tracking and support have resulted in an improvement in the progress of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in 2017. However, differences in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils compared with that of other pupils nationally are still too large because the impact of leaders' planning has been inconsistent. The progress of these groups of pupils is a key priority for leaders in the Academy Improvement Plan.

Governance of the school

- The chief executive officer of the trust understands accurately the school's strengths and weaknesses and he provides support and challenge to the principal on a weekly basis. Alongside the principal, the chief executive officer conducts regular 'impact' meetings where senior leaders are held to account against their improvement targets.
- Members of the school's local governing body are well trained, well organised and strategic. They receive a wide range of information about the school from senior leaders. They know how to interpret this information and they ask pertinent questions to leaders about the school's performance.
- Governors work closely with school leaders. They deepen their evaluations of the school's effectiveness through regular visits and meetings with staff. They also work with external consultants to ensure that leaders' judgements are accurate.
- Governors oversee the effective arrangements for managing the performance of staff and for the principal.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff at all levels receive regular safeguarding training and they understand the procedures to follow if they have concerns.
- School leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are logged and followed-up. The maintenance of child protection files is effective and leaders work well with representatives from other agencies.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The impact of leaders' actions to improve teaching is evident across a wide range of subjects. Most teachers are well organised, they know their pupils well and support them to make good progress.

- Pupils make particularly good progress when teachers plan lessons that take into account the needs of all members of the class. For example, in a geography lesson, a range of carefully considered learning activities supported all pupils to produce high-quality work from their different starting points.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge supports pupils to make good progress. At its most effective, teachers use their subject knowledge to inspire and motivate pupils to work hard and challenge themselves in their work.
- Pupils receive helpful advice on how to improve their work. Assessment in different forms is used well both to gauge exactly what pupils can do and also to provide them with additional guidance on how to improve further. This was seen in a wide range of subjects, in particular technology, languages and mathematics.
- Leaders' focus on supporting pupils to be more reflective and to spend time considering how to improve their own learning is becoming embedded across the curriculum. Successful examples of this strategy were seen in physics, mathematics and photography lessons.
- Many teachers use questioning skilfully to allow them to provide pupils with specific feedback about what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils make good progress when their teachers make it clear exactly what is expected of them and provide them with examples that demonstrate the required level of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- At times, learning is not sufficiently planned to meet the different needs of all pupils. For example, sometimes tasks do not stretch the most able pupils. Not all teachers make regular checks during lessons to gauge the extent to which pupils are being challenged or if they are ready to move on to more complex work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- Leaders' work to provide information, guidance and support for careers is a strength. The school's dedicated information, advice and guidance team provides a comprehensive programme of activities that begins in Year 8. Pupils acknowledge the quality of the support and, as a consequence, very high numbers of pupils progress to education, employment or training.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in most lessons and behaviour is managed well by teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and examples of low level disruption are rare. Pupils undertake individual, paired and group tasks with enthusiasm.
- Pupils take pride in their work, they are smart in their uniforms and are welcoming to visitors. They show respect for one another's opinions and differences, and they have developed a range of pupil forums to continue to break down prejudice and offer support to each other.
- Pupils learn how to stay healthy and safe both through the 'Communications and

Culture' curriculum and the tutorial programme. Topics covered across the curriculum include sex and relationships education, bullying, e-safety and drugs awareness.

- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are happy to share their views and to reflect on their learning both in and out of the classroom.
- The personal development and welfare of the small number of pupils who are in alternative provision is good. Members of the school's staff accompany pupils at all times and the school maintains regular contact with the providers. The school receives progress reports each term and undertakes periodic spot checks of the provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is positive. Pupils quickly follow the instructions of their teachers and they work hard. There was little evidence of any low level disruption during the inspection. Visiting speakers, who presented to Year 11 pupils during the inspection, described pupils' behaviour as 'exceptional'.
- Behaviour outside of lessons is also good. Pupils move around the school in an orderly and respectful manner. They congregate in small social groups both within the school grounds and inside the buildings at both break and lunchtime.
- Punctuality, both at the beginning of the day and throughout it, is good.
- The overall attendance of pupils is above average, while the number of pupils who are persistently absent is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have been excluded from school has remained consistently below average over the last three years.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are absent, persistently absent and excluded from school more frequently than their peers. Leaders are aware that their actions have not yet had sufficient impact. They have made changes to the school's leadership structure to provide additional support for these pupils. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these changes.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment is high and rose significantly in 2017 where the proportion of pupils attaining a standard pass in both English and mathematics and in the English Baccalaureate was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining a strong pass in both English and mathematics was also well above the national average.
- Pupils' progress from their different starting points has improved. Pupils taking GCSEs in 2016 did not make enough progress from their starting points. However, the unvalidated 2017 GCSE results indicate that pupils' progress is now in line with those who had similar starting points nationally. Pupils who join the school with middle prior attainment make more progress than their lower and higher attaining peers.
- The attainment of pupils currently in the school continues to be high. In key stage 4, the recent rises in attainment in English and mathematics are being maintained, while

attainment across science, history, geography, computing and languages is higher than in previous years. These improvements are reflected in the standard of pupils' work seen in lessons. Progress across key stage 4 is good, however, the progress of the most able pupils at key stage 4 was not as good from their starting points as other pupils.

- The progress of pupils across key stage 3 is good and in line with leaders' high expectations. Pupils with low prior attainment are making particularly good progress in Years 7 and 8, while middle attaining pupils are making the progress that is expected of them. As in key stage 4, the most able pupils are making less consistent progress and the level of challenge in the work of the most able pupils varies.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make less consistent progress than pupils with similar starting points. The progress of this group of pupils improved in 2017 but the progress of those currently in the school is variable. This is as a result of their above average absence and because changes to the leadership of SEN and/or disabilities are still being embedded.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is also less consistent than their non-disadvantaged peers. Disadvantaged pupils' progress did not improve in 2017 and they made considerably less progress compared with all pupils with similar prior starting points nationally. However, improvements in the progress of current disadvantaged pupils are evident as a result of more rigorous monitoring of pupils' performance and more effective support being provided for pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who move on to employment, education or training is very high.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The sixth form is more effective than the main school because work on improving provision has had more time to embed. Leaders have successfully brought about rapid and sustained improvements.
- Leaders are tenacious. They know the strengths of the sixth form and have developed focused plans that have addressed key areas for improvement. Their monitoring of both the quality of teaching and learning and of students' performance has had a significant impact on outcomes.
- Pupils' overall progress has been significantly above average for the last three years and there have been rapid improvements in the results of a small number of A Level subjects where performance had been inconsistent. Students' progress is now above average in nearly all subjects. Success rates for students achieving a 'standard' pass in GCSE English and/or mathematics are well above average.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers' extensive subject knowledge, high-level questioning skills and strong individual support for students has a significant impact on their progress. One student commented, 'I commute a long way, but it is worth it for the staff expertise.'
- Study programmes are highly individualised. Students are supported to make appropriate curriculum choices through highly effective guidance that focuses on their talents, interests and aspirations. Students participate in a diverse enrichment

programme which covers topics such as finance, the local labour market and personal well-being and they are supported to undertake work experience placements. Many students complete the Extended Project Qualification and they are encouraged to participate in the many sixth-form committees, such as medical, enterprise and equality.

- Careers information, advice and guidance are wide ranging and of excellent quality. Students feel very well supported to move to either education, employment or training. A student commented, 'Staff want us to be rounded candidates and individuals.'
- Students' attendance is very high and punctuality to lessons is an expectation which is consistently met by students.
- Students are very positive about the high level of support and care that they receive from the sixth-form team. The proportion of students completing sixth-form courses is above average and eight out of 10 students attend university after leaving sixth form.

School details

Unique reference number	137461
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10037627

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

Type of school	Secondary/Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Girls/Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1563
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	310
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Neil Collins
Principal	Jonathan Rockey
Telephone number	01953 602 078
Website	www.wymondhamhigh.co.uk
Email address	principalsoffice@wh-at.net
Date of previous inspection	10–11 July 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is an academy convertor within the ieTrust. There is a trust board, a chief executive officer and a board chair. The school has retained its local governing body and chair of governors.

- The school uses Norwich City College and Otley College for its alternative education provision.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who attend the school is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence from: 57 visits to lessons, some carried out jointly with the school’s senior leaders; discussions with pupils; meetings with staff, governors and a representative from the ieTrust; reviews of pupils’ work in books; and examination of the school’s website, key documents, such as those relating to safeguarding, assessment information and school surveys and observations of the daily operations of the school, including registration periods, breaktimes and lesson changeovers.
- Inspectors analysed the 217 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, alongside the 136 free-text responses to the same questionnaire. The team also took into account the 223 pupil responses and the 56 staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaires.

Inspection team

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