



# Hellesdon High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 121152  
**LEA** NORFOLK LEA  
**Inspection number** 280941  
**Inspection dates** 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Keith Wheeldon LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Middletons Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		NR6 5SB
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	12 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01603424711
<b>Number on roll</b>	1124	<b>Fax number</b>	01603487602
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Michael Creed
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Bill Gould

<b>Age group</b> 12 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 280941
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Hellesdon High is a large comprehensive school for pupils aged 12 - 18. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds including some with high levels of deprivation but the number entitled to free school meals is low. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. When pupils transfer here from middle school at the age of 12 attainment is close to the national average although there is a high proportion of pupils who are poor at reading. There is also a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. The school has a large sixth form. Post-16 provision is made as part of the Wensum partnership in collaboration with two other local high schools, adult education and with Norwich City College.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Hellesdon High is an improving school which provides pupils with a satisfactory education. Senior staff know its strengths and they know where improvement is necessary, although they are sometimes too generous in judging the school's performance. Over the last few years standards have been too low and the senior leadership team and other staff have worked hard to make improvements. They have done so successfully. Pupils now make steady progress and GCSE results are rising. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The school has effective arrangements to evaluate the quality of provision. The quality of teaching is good but the impact of this has yet to be reflected in all examination results. In lessons there is too great an emphasis on direct teaching rather than on pupils developing ideas and thinking for themselves. The school makes good use of data to track pupils' progress and to predict examination results. This information is regularly shared with pupils and parents but the school does not always use data effectively to evaluate the impact of various initiatives. The school has satisfactory systems to reward pupils for their successes and has sensibly consulted them to ensure these rewards are valued. However, there is still some way to go before pupils feel it is 'cool' to be seen as academically successful. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory. Pupils, parents and teachers say there are times when the behaviour of individuals is unacceptable although this was not seen by inspectors. The school has systems to tackle such misbehaviour but the level of exclusions is too high. Over recent years the rate of improvement has been good and the school is in a good position to make further improvements.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

Inspectors found the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form to be satisfactory rather than good, as judged by the school. Sixth form provision has improved considerably over the last few years and students are now offered a good range of courses in collaboration with partner institutions. However, the impact of many initiatives has yet to be seen in a rise in standards. Students' progress is satisfactory although examination results are below average. Students are well cared for and some are successfully involved in helping younger pupils. Teaching is satisfactory and students are given good advice regarding future careers. Leadership and management are satisfactory but procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of provision are under-developed.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to raise standards and improve test and examination results to ensure that all pupils and students do as well as they possibly can. - Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching are, where necessary, followed by action to promote better learning. - Raise pupils' aspirations and develop a culture in which it is accepted that pupils' achievements are publicly recognised and celebrated. - Ensure that the teaching

and the students' progress in the sixth form are monitored more effectively. - Reduce the number of exclusions.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The school assesses pupils' achievement and standards as good but inspectors judge them to be satisfactory overall. Pupils make steady progress as they move through the school. In 2005, results in tests at age 14 were average and the school successfully met its targets, which are based on careful predictions of each pupil's potential. Results were above average in mathematics, average in English, but there was underachievement in science. Teacher assessments in other subjects were below average overall. Over the last few years there has been an upward trend in the results of 16 year olds. The school slightly exceeds its targets, which are well considered. Over the last few years results for pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at A\* to C have risen steadily and were average in 2005. Higher attaining pupils are doing significantly better than those in similar schools. The persistent absence of a significant minority of pupils aged 15 and 16 adversely affects their learning but those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Students in the sixth form make steady progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Inspectors judge pupils' personal development and well-being as satisfactory with some good features although the school feels that provision is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. There are a number of highlights, such as the annual carol concert in Norwich Cathedral, but there are relatively few opportunities for pupils to be reflective or to develop an understanding of their own and other cultures. As a result of sustained effort by the school, attendance has improved steadily and is now in line with the national average. The attitudes and behaviour of most pupils are satisfactory. They interact well with one another and respond well to their teachers. Most pupils feel the school is free from bullying but if it occurs they say that it is dealt with quickly and firmly. There is occasionally some serious misbehaviour and the proportion of pupils, mainly boys, who have been excluded for short periods remains stubbornly high. Most pupils enjoy being at school and many participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There is good sports provision. The school encourages healthy living through food technology lessons and, for example, by careful management of the canteen. Pupils satisfactorily adopt healthy life styles and are good at carrying out tasks safely. The contribution that pupils make to the community is satisfactory and they have a sound understanding of the world of work. Pupils and students willingly accept responsibility but find the year council system does not work well.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Inspectors agree with the school that teaching and learning in the main school are good overall. Most of the teaching seen by inspectors was good or better, with no unsatisfactory lessons. Some outstanding lessons were seen in art and in physical education. Here the teachers' subject knowledge was excellent; they understood pupils' individual needs and there was a real desire to learn. In the good lessons teachers use a wide variety of teaching strategies and manage pupils well. The majority of teachers have high expectations of pupils, who in turn respect and appreciate the teachers' specialist knowledge. The use of group and paired work is improving pupils' personal and social development. Classroom resources are used effectively. The use of questioning by teachers to better explore pupils' understanding is inconsistent. In the good lessons teachers work hard to involve pupils but in the satisfactory lessons pupils are not expected to participate enough and the evaluation of their learning is under-developed. The school believes that teaching and learning in the sixth form are satisfactory and sometimes good, and inspectors agree. The best lessons are varied and challenging but in the satisfactory lessons students are too dependent on the teacher. There are marked differences in the quality of students' work. Girls' work is usually well organised and so is much easier to revise from than that of the boys.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which meets statutory requirements and gives pupils a balanced education. There is, however, too little time for information and communications technology for pupils aged 12 to 14 and consequently pupils do not do as well as they could. The personal, social and health education programme satisfactorily raises pupils' awareness to the dangers of misusing drugs, alcohol and tobacco. At the age of 14 pupils have the choice of three pathways which successfully gives them the opportunity to pursue academic and vocational courses to match their interests and aptitudes. The inclusion of vocational studies, with a variety of courses offered at the school and elsewhere, gives more pupils the opportunity of leaving school with a suitable range of qualifications. Through the Wensum partnership the school offers a very good range of advanced and vocational courses and an interesting enrichment programme in the sixth form.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

#### Grade for sixth form: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is good which reflects the school's judgement. The programme of assessment and the monitoring of pupils' performance is robust and used to good effect. The school uses an effective system to track pupils' progress, and information is regularly shared with them and their parents so they know whether performance is in line with predictions. Targets are set, monitored and, where necessary, additional learning opportunities are provided for pupils who need support. There is a satisfactory rewards programme which pupils find encouraging, but the school does not do enough to publicly celebrate pupils' educational successes. Throughout the school the quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance about future choices is good. The school makes effective use of outside agencies to support and guide pupils. Peer counselling has been recently introduced to good effect. Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils who have special educational needs and for those in public care is good. Sixth form provision is satisfactory with some good features. Arrangements for monitoring progress in the sixth form are not as effective as those in the main school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Although the school feels its leadership and management are good, and inspectors agree there are some good features, overall it is satisfactory in the main school and the sixth form. Senior managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but their judgements against performance criteria are sometimes too generous. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, at the heart of which is the drive to ensure that pupils achieve high standards. He is well supported by the governors and other staff in realising this aim. Over the last few years senior and middle managers have successfully driven up standards for pupils aged 16 from a very low baseline. Careful management has led to changes in attitudes to learning and a marked improvement in pupils' progress; these are hard won improvements. Most of this improvement stems from the school's good use of data to monitor pupils' progress and to monitor the quality of provision. Teachers know there is no room for complacency. The monitoring of and by middle managers is good. Each has a good understanding of their department's strengths and weaknesses. They have clear action plans which are directed at further improving standards and which successfully address the shortcomings they have identified. The school makes good use of external support to help with these processes and takes due account of pupils' and parents' views. There is still more to do if the school is to realise its aim of ensuring pupils succeed at the highest level and that all pupils make consistently good progress, in all subjects, year after year. While its use of data is good, the school does not always analyse information sufficiently well to identify which initiatives are successful and which are not, and why. The school is well placed to make further improvements. Careful

management has led to a rise in student numbers in the sixth form. The range of courses has increased and students benefit from access to the expertise available in partner schools and colleges. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating sixth form provision are not sufficiently linked to outcomes or subsequent action.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	insufficient evidence

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I recently visited your school with a team of inspectors to look at how well you were progressing. I would like to thank all of you who took the time to tell us about your education. Your honest comments helped us get an accurate picture of the school. We found that most of you are making steady progress, that you like school and that the teaching is usually good. I think that the traffic light system that teachers use to keep track of your progress works well. It helps you know if you need to work harder and it helps teachers decide if you need extra help. Over the last few years' examination results at the end of Year 11 have improved a lot and the information we saw shows that with continued effort from you and your teachers results will be even better. You are fortunate in having the chance of taking part in many sports and other activities out of lessons. These extra-curricular activities are an important part of your education. We found behaviour in lessons and around the school was satisfactory. Most of you felt that if there is any bullying you could tell a teacher and you could trust them to sort it out quickly and firmly. The school has systems to deal with misbehaviour but at present there are too many times when pupils are sent home. We have asked the headteacher and governors to look at ways of reducing the number of pupils who are excluded in this way. You might be able to help as well. If you know somebody who has trouble coping with school or with a bad temper they may find it helps to talk to another pupil. Many of you stay on into the sixth form where you have a really good range of courses from which to choose. If you are in the sixth form you will know that some of the teaching is good but there are lessons where the teaching is rather undemanding. I've asked the headteacher and the head of sixth form to look at ways of improving this satisfactory teaching, but you too can play a part. Sixth form study is about asking questions and challenging assumptions so do not hesitate to take a more active part in lessons. We also noticed a very marked difference in students' work in the sixth form. The girls' work is usually neat and easy to read but the boys need to organise their notes much better so that when it comes to revision you can all read what you have written. At the moment there are a few pupils at Hellesdon High who do not seem to think that education is all that important. However, the headteacher and other staff think it is essential you get a good start in life. I've asked them to find ways to give greater recognition to good effort and achievement so those who do well are publicly commended for their efforts. Make sure you play your part as well.