



Alderman Peel High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121170
LEA NORFOLK LEA
Inspection number 280946
Inspection dates 11 July 2006 to 12 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Stephen Abbott HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Market Lane
School category	Community		NR23 1RB
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01328 710476
Number on roll	305	Fax number	01328 710767
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Martin Dutton
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2000	Headteacher	Ms. Cheryl Crawford and Mr Jonathan Platten

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	11 July 2006 - 12 July 2006	280946

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. Lessons were suspended on the first day of the inspection, which coincided with an academic guidance day when students discussed their targets with staff. Lesson observations were therefore supplemented with additional scrutiny of students' work.

Description of the school

Alderman Peel High School is much smaller than the average sized comprehensive. It serves the small Norfolk town of Wells-next-the-Sea and the surrounding area. The school is a designated Extended School and provides a variety of community services. It is an associate member of the Rural Norfolk Federation of Schools and is the hub school for the North Norfolk School Sports Co-ordination Partnership. Unusually, the headteacher role has been shared for the last year, with the headteacher working part-time and the deputy headteacher serving as joint headteacher. Almost all students are of White British background. One student in five is eligible for free school meals. This is above average, but seasonal employment patterns mean that more students experience social and economic disadvantage. Students' attainment on entry to the school is below average, with relatively few attaining beyond the expected level for their age. Just over 7% of students have statements of special educational needs. The school caters for the full range of ability with students taking GCSEs in Years 9 and 10 as well as 11; some take AS level in Year 11.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Alderman Peel High School is a good school with some outstanding features, providing good value for money. It has improved effectively since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further. The school's self-evaluation is good and it develops effective responses. It is well led at all levels and has made good use of a joint headteacher arrangement to develop leadership and management skills among a wider range of staff. The school's small size brings a mixture of benefits and challenges. One benefit is that the students all know each other and are all known by nearly every member of staff. A particular strength of the school is its inclusive approach. The quality of care, guidance and support is very good. As a result, students' personal development and well-being are good and their behaviour is outstanding. Provision is good for all students and support is outstanding for those with learning difficulties and statements of educational need. The school has considerable and growing expertise in meeting the needs of students with complex needs. The headteachers have provided strong leadership to develop an exceptional network of partnerships that help to meet the challenges faced by a small school. There are strong links with the wider community through the school's status as an extended school and as the hub school for a large sports partnership. Work with the Rural Norfolk Federation, partner specialist schools and the Wells cluster of schools has promoted innovative solutions to shared problems. A significant dip in standards and achievement in 2005 resulted from an unfortunate combination of factors beyond the school's control. Nevertheless, the acting headteacher instigated an effective programme of improvement measures. As a result, teaching and learning are now good overall, although not all the intended improvements in assessment are fully in place. For example, the quality of marking is variable and the assessment by students of their own and each other's work is not consistently established. The curriculum meets students' personalised needs well, though literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are underdeveloped. Achievement is good because, on average, students join the school with levels of attainment that are below the national expectation for their age and leave with standards that match the national average. Progress is good overall but satisfactory in the core subjects of mathematics and English. Some students' work is difficult to follow because of poor handwriting or inadequately explained mathematical working.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in the core subjects of mathematics and English to match those evident in overall GCSE results, ensuring that all subjects help to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
- Improve the consistency of marking and the use of peer and self-assessment to ensure that students know how to improve.
- Improve students' handwriting and presentation of mathematical work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students' achievement is good because they attain standards in line with the national average at age 16, having been an average of half a year behind when they joined the school at age 11. They progress well and obtain better GCSE results on average than similar students elsewhere. The school has appropriate systems to set whole-school targets and targets for individual students. Exceptionally, standards in English and mathematics were low and achievement was disappointing for students completing Key Stage 3 in 2005. GCSE results declined from the previous year, but still represented good progress for the students concerned. Standards in science were in line with national averages. Staff illness affecting the teaching of core subjects was a major factor in the poor results. With specialist long-term supply teachers being scarce locally, the school's size means that the illness of one teacher affects a high proportion of students. The effectiveness of the school is therefore better represented by the standards currently being reached and by the results from 2003 and 2004. Students make at least satisfactory progress by age 14. Achievement in Key Stage 3 mathematics and science is slowly improving and is good for students now reaching the end of Key Stage 3. Along with their satisfactory progress in English, this has enabled them to catch up a little with national expectations. Changes to the curriculum in Key Stage 4, improvements in teaching and learning and better monitoring of students' progress have all contributed to raising achievement for older students. When all subjects are considered together, students at age 16 attain standards in line with the national average. GCSE results in English and mathematics are below average but represent satisfactory progress and, apart from the dip in 2005, improving standards. Achievement is very good among students who had been below national expectations at age 11; for boys in this category, progress has been good for some time. Students who have learning difficulties or disabilities make very good progress. Those with statements of special need make outstanding progress because of the specialist support they receive. Students with high prior attainment now achieve well, and many more students are reaching the higher levels in mathematics and science tests at age 14.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good and their behaviour is outstanding. They enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. The quality of their relationships with each other and with adults is a real strength. Attendance is slightly below the national average but improving. However, it has already exceeded the attendance target agreed with the Local Authority, two years earlier than expected. The school provides good and varied opportunities to enhance students' personal development, many through its partnerships, and has made considerable efforts to help students understand and respect cultures other than their own. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are pleased and proud to be trusted with responsibilities. Many roles involve them supporting each other, such as being peer mentors and reading partners. They willingly play an active role in school

and local community life because staff give them the encouragement and opportunities. The sense of community spirit in the school is strong and students support the school well. For example, students attend school events at the weekend and a group of Year 11 leavers returned to speak to the inspection team. Students adopt safe practices and are well informed about the hazards they face, for example in laboratories and technology rooms. They understand the importance of a healthy diet and value the numerous opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports, both on and off site. They develop good skills to prepare them for life after school. Special effort is made to widen students' horizons both geographically and culturally, including good use of many valuable business links. This is helping to motivate and inspire students.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and most students make good progress. Teaching is monitored effectively and opportunities exist for sharing good practice, particularly through the work of the school's advanced skills teacher. The last year has seen a major drive to improve teaching and learning by ensuring that students understand the learning objectives, by structuring lessons carefully to engage students, and by using assessment well to guide students on what they need to do to improve. The impact of this work was evident in the lessons observed during the inspection, most of which were good with the rest being satisfactory. The observations confirmed that lessons consistently have clear learning objectives that focus on what students should know, understand and be able to do. They also have a balanced and varied pattern of activities. However, as yet, peer- and self-assessment are not used regularly to assist students' progress and marking does not consistently detail for students what they need to do to improve. The most effective lessons are delivered briskly with a variety of well-planned activities. Teachers use open-ended questions to stretch students' thinking and provide good support for those who need individual help. They use enthusiastic, well directed positive comments to ensure that all remain on task and make liberal use of praise to reward good contributions and notable progress. In less effective lessons, the pace was slow and students were not challenged to think for themselves. Some students' work is difficult to follow because they are not consistently encouraged to use their neatest handwriting or to explain their methods through mathematical working. Learning support assistants provide very good support in the classroom for those with learning difficulties. The provision for students attending the learning support room is outstanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good quality of the curriculum is particularly commendable in view of the small size of the school. Students also benefit from an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, music, art and information communication technology.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is increasingly personalised to ensure that all students' needs are met, including the gifted and talented and those with additional learning needs. Higher attaining students can take some GCSEs earlier than normal and have access to an AS course in critical thinking. Support for students with literacy difficulties is good but not all departments consistently contribute to the development of literacy and numeracy skills for all students. The impressive range of science courses includes single, double or separate sciences and a BTEC First Diploma. The school has expanded vocational provision and work experience opportunities, particularly in land based courses, through an innovative partnership with the Holkham Estate and Easton College. This has helped to re-engage students who had been at risk of disaffection. The school's effective provision for citizenship and personal, social and health education is a significant factor in developing students' roles as responsible citizens and caring members of the community. The school has been rightly commended for its extended school activities, which make a valuable contribution to the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good attention is paid to students' care and welfare. Procedures for child protection are good and all staff have a good level of awareness through regular training. The student welfare and inclusion team takes a proactive approach to its work and behaviour and attendance are improving as a result. Staff are willing to put in extra support where a need has been identified. For example, they created the Year 7 'Talk About' social skills tutorial programme. Guidance on careers and further study is very good and the school works effectively with Connexions advisers to help students choose appropriate courses. Students' progress against their targets is monitored well and those likely to underachieve are identified and supported, particularly with coursework. Academic guidance days when students discussed their targets with staff have been introduced this year and one was held during the inspection. Feedback so far is encouraging, but the school is aware that students need sharper targets to be set to gain full benefit from the occasion. Support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. This is why these students make very good progress. There is creative use of a talented and skilled team, good links and sharing of expertise with external agencies and an outward looking, innovative approach. The small number of students with statements of special need make outstanding progress because of the highly individual learning programmes they receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management at all levels are effective. There is a clear and well understood focus on improving outcomes for students, both by improving the quality of teaching and by improving students' readiness to learn. The impact of this work is apparent in the engagement of students and in the improved standards. For the last year, the school has been in the position of having two people sharing the headteacher

role. The headteacher has been working in a part time capacity, focusing on the development of partnerships and specialist programmes beyond the school and giving other teachers opportunities to take leadership roles. The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher, focusing particularly on internal issues like improving teaching and learning and the day to day running of the school. The school has made good progress on both fronts. The school's self-evaluation and action planning are good. The rationale for change is clear because monitoring and quality assurance are effective and the findings are analysed to identify the underlying causes of problems or strengths. Senior leaders and governors have a high profile in the school, and can respond quickly to emerging problems as well as developing longer term strategies. They listen to the views of staff, students and parents. The school is strongly inclusive and welcomes diversity among staff and students. Day to day management of the school is effective. School leaders have a good capacity to make the necessary improvements. They have addressed well the points for improvement from the last inspection. Resources are used wisely and there are longer term plans to conserve resources, for example by improving energy efficiency. Appropriate safeguards are in place to check on the suitability of prospective employees. The school provides good value for money.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

As you know, your school was inspected recently and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. I would like to thank you all on behalf of the inspection team for your co-operation and assistance during our visit. We appreciated your comments and opinions. You told us how much you like your school. We think that Alderman Peel High School is a good school with some outstanding features, one of which is your behaviour. Its small size means that you all know each other and are known by nearly every member of staff. This means that you get very good care, guidance and support, and this is helping your personal development. Your school provides you with a good education and it gives outstanding support for those of you with special educational needs. We were impressed with the number of partnerships and community links that help the school to give you a wide range of opportunities. The school offers a variety of courses and out-of-school activities and does its best to meet the individual needs of each of you. Your teachers have worked hard to improve teaching and learning, which are now good, and this helps you to make good progress. Every inspection ends with some suggestions for how the school can improve. We have asked your teachers to: - help you to develop better literacy and numeracy skills so that mathematics and English GCSE results improve - make sure that you get enough feedback from marking and self-assessment to show you how to make your work better - help some of you to improve the presentation of your work We wish you and the school staff well in the future.