



Cromer High School and Language College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121209
LEA NORFOLK LEA
Inspection number 280956
Inspection dates 28 March 2006 to 29 March 2006
Reporting inspector Dr. Kenneth Thomas LI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Norwich Road
School category	Foundation		NR27 0EX
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01263 511433
Number on roll	715	Fax number	01263 515378
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Tim Bennett
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Ronald Munson

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 28 March 2006 - 29 March 2006	Inspection number 280956
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Cromer High School and Language College is an 11 to 16 mixed comprehensive school. The school has been a specialist Language College since 2001 and this status has recently been reaffirmed. The school is below average in size with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls on roll. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average as are the proportions with learning difficulties or disabilities and with statements of special educational need. Standards on entry are average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that its performance is satisfactory. Standards and achievement are satisfactory, as is value for money. The headteacher and senior staff are aware that in order to raise standards there is a need to strengthen school management and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In particular, there is a need to strengthen management and raise standards in English. Through the monitoring and evaluation of its work the school has gathered a good deal of information on its performance, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching and learning. In order to ensure that pupils make more rapid progress there is a now a need to make use of this information to ensure that the most effective teaching becomes more widespread and that assessment is used effectively in all subjects. There is also a need to eliminate the low level disruptive behaviour that slows progress in some lessons. Most pupils enjoy their school life in a safe and secure environment where they are encouraged to learn and their achievements are celebrated. The school has introduced greater flexibility into the Key Stage 4 curriculum and has developed good links through its status as a specialist college with other schools and the community. The support provided to pupils as they enter the school is good as is the advice and guidance they receive as they consider their options when they leave school. Since the last inspection the school has achieved specialist Language College status and the school's recent application for redesignation has been successful. This, together with the raising of standards in modern foreign languages, demonstrates the school's capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve standards and pupils' progress in English by increasing the effectiveness of subject leadership and management. - Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that assessment information is used effectively in all subjects and that pupils are fully engaged in all lessons. - Improve the effectiveness of both senior and middle managers and ensure that all school strategies for raising standards and achievement are fully implemented and rigorously monitored, with outcomes measured and action taken as needed.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment on entry is average. They make satisfactory progress and achieve average results in Year 9 national tests. English results are lower than mathematics and science, particularly for more able pupils, who did not achieve as well as they could in 2005. Whilst the inspection judged standards and progress at Key Stage 4 to be satisfactory overall, the 2005 GCSE results were below average and pupils' average score in their best eight subjects declined significantly. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades was below average, although the proportion gaining five or more A* to G grades was above

average. Taken overall, these results represent satisfactory progress when standards on entry of this year group are taken into account. However, pupils' progress in English has been below average for several years and declined significantly in 2005.

Nevertheless, school assessment information and inspection evidence shows that as a result of good arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress and the provision of additional support for those in danger of underachieving, progress in English has improved. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils perform relatively well in science, geography, history and German, but do less well in design and technology. In both key stages, girls have done less well than boys for the last two years, significantly so in the 2005 GCSE results. The school's own data indicate that girls in the current cohort have improved attitudes and are predicted to do better than last year. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and make satisfactory progress. The school met its target for GCSE performance in 2005, although the target was very undemanding. The 2006 target is more challenging, although still below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades. The school has been successful in meeting its specialist Language College targets and standards in modern foreign languages are rising.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well-being of pupils are satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes to learning. Although the school works hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly, attendance is adversely affected by family holidays taken in term time and is below average as a result. Behaviour both around the school and in most lessons is satisfactory. The number of exclusions is well below average and permanent exclusions are infrequent. However, progress in some lessons is disrupted because of the immature behaviour of a minority of pupils, mostly boys. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Spirituality, identified as a weakness in the last inspection report, has improved through the introduction of a regular thought for the day. Pupils' understanding of European cultures is considerably enhanced through the many activities associated with the Language College. However, not enough is done to develop pupils' understanding of the wider multicultural nature of modern Britain. Pupils respond well to the school's efforts to develop healthier lifestyles and the school council has contributed to the development of a more healthy lunch menu. Most pupils spend two hours each week on physical activities and many participate in the large number of after-school clubs and other activities as well as the many competitive sports teams. All pupils are encouraged to stay safe and many take opportunities to assist in school and community events. Through the personal, social, and health education programme and work experience, pupils develop many of the skills that they will be able to use in their working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but vary in quality. In the better lessons, teachers have high expectations and manage pupils well. They make good use of interactive whiteboards to give clear, effective presentations, and ask searching questions that make pupils think for themselves. A strong feature in many of the good lessons is the effective use of assessment to extend pupils' thinking. In these lessons, teachers give pupils very clear feedback on what they need to do in order to improve. Pupils learn effectively from assessing their own and others' work against clear learning targets. In the weaker lessons, learning is too often slowed by disruptive attention-seeking behaviour of a minority of pupils. In most instances, this is initiated by boys and when this occurs there is a tendency for girls to opt out of the lesson. In a few lessons, pupils' progress is slowed because explanations are unclear and not enough checks are made on pupils' learning. In some cases, time is not used well and there is not enough consolidation of pupils' learning at the end of the lesson. The school has been focusing on improving teaching and learning. Although this has led to the development of good practice in some subjects it has not in others. In the use of assessment, for example, there is evidence of excellent practice in some subjects, such as history and geography, while in others the marking of pupils' work is irregular and gives little guidance for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. The school has identified the need to enhance provision for gifted and talented pupils, and inspectors agree. Some aspects of the curriculum are highly innovative. For example, in order to capitalise more fully on the learning opportunities provided after the GCSE examination period, the school starts the academic year in June rather than September. The curriculum also relates particularly well to the interests and aptitudes of pupils in Key Stage 4, where the range of GCSE options is extended by a number of vocational courses. These include hairdressing, bricklaying and farm management which are offered in collaboration with local colleges. The organisation of the Key Stage 4 curriculum is unusually flexible and enables pupils to match their option choices very closely to their interests. Consistent with the school's Language College status, all pupils take a modern foreign language. The provision of a vocational French course, alongside the GCSE courses, helps to ensure that all pupils are able to take a language course that is matched to their attainment levels. Satisfactory provision is made for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The personal, social and health education course, together with the enterprise and industry days, contributes successfully to pupils' understanding of responsible citizenship and help to prepare them for life after school. Pupils with learning and other difficulties have good access to the curriculum and the choices within it. The

school offers a good range of enrichment activities. International Dimension week is eagerly anticipated by younger pupils and enables them to get out and about in this country and abroad. Many pupils take part in the wide range of sporting activities and other extra-curricular activities. This provision has been recognised by the school's achievement of the Artsmark and Sportsmark awards. Good links with a variety of local businesses effectively support pupils' work experience in Year 10.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Health and safety procedures are clear and fully in place and all staff know and understand the arrangements for child protection. Arrangements for ensuring the safety of pupils are good. Staff work effectively with external agencies to support any pupils who may be at risk. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, parents highlighted the effective support given by the special needs department and the contribution that this is making to the progress of their children. The use of assessment information for target setting and monitoring pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection, although there is still some inconsistency in practice. Through regular reports, both parents and pupils now have a clearer understanding of the progress their children are making. Links with local primary schools are enhanced by the school's Language College activities and help to ensure smooth transition between institutions. Good links with the local colleges, together with effective careers advice and guidance, help to ensure smooth transition to further education or employment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

School leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear commitment to the achievement of high standards and this commitment is shared by other senior managers, governors and staff. Evidence of this commitment is seen, for example, in the recent successful application for the school's redesignation as a specialist Language College. The school's strategy for improvement is based on extensive monitoring and evaluation and includes regular surveys of the views of parents and pupils. The school is making more effective use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress and identify underperformance. However, there is a need to interpret the information more clearly to ensure that there is a common understanding of the progress that different groups of pupils are making. Senior managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the priorities identified in the school development plan are not linked directly enough to the raising of standards to provide a clear agenda for school improvement. The quality of middle management is satisfactory. Although effective subject leadership is seen, for example, in the humanities subjects and science, there is too much variation in the quality of subject leadership and this is slowing the rate of improvement, particularly in English. Governance is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met and resources are managed effectively. There are good links with other organizations and

the school is strengthening links with the community through its specialist school activities. The school has the capacity to make further improvements as exemplified by the improving standards in modern foreign languages.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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, a group of inspectors visited your school. 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. I am writing now to tell you about our findings. Here are some of the things we found out about your school. Your head teacher and all of the staff at the school do things with your best interests in mind. They are committed to improving your examination and test results. They are also keen to improve the opportunities available to you and this is shown in the school becoming a Language College. Almost all of you are aware of this and are happy to come to school and take advantage of the opportunities the school provides for you. We found that most of you behave sensibly around the school and in lessons and that when lessons are lively and interesting you are fully engaged and make good progress. You are well cared for and many older pupils contribute to this by the jobs you do such as helping younger pupils. The Year 10 and 11 options are provided in an unusually flexible way and this allows almost all of you to take your first choices. There is a good range of out of school opportunities, which many of you take part in and enjoy. We have asked your school to do three things to help the school improve: - To improve your examination results in English and make absolutely sure that you all do as well as you can - To share the best teaching ideas so that all lessons are interesting and that behaviour is improved so that you can concentrate on your work - Strengthen school management and ensure that all of the school's plans for improvement are put into action. Once again thank you for your welcome.