



# Wymondham High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 121171  
**Local Authority** NORFOLK  
**Inspection number** 292039  
**Inspection date** 9 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** John Mitcheson HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Folly Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Wymondham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18		Norfolk NR18 0QT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01953602078
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1393	<b>Fax number</b>	01953605518
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	199		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nick Francis
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Brunton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 January 2003		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–18	9 January 2007	292039

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Wymondham High School is a larger than average specialist arts school with 1194 students in the main school and 199 in the sixth form, most of whom live in or around the generally affluent town of Wymondham. It is a very popular school and always over-subscribed. There are more girls than boys, most of whom come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry is above average. A new headteacher was appointed in 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with an outstanding sixth form that enables students to achieve well and regularly attain above average standards. It provides a caring and supportive environment in which most students flourish. Parents quite rightly perceive it to be a highly effective school, commenting that, 'Wymondham High School is an example of what secondary education should be. I feel it has not only developed my children's academic abilities but has also developed their self-esteem and social skills, and I feel very pleased with all aspects of the school'. It is a school under-going a period of necessary change in order to raise achievement further, build upon its good reputation in the local community and demonstrate that at Wymondham High School, every child does matter.

Students enter the school with attainment levels that are above the national average and make good progress throughout both key stages, achieving results in national tests and examinations that are consistently above the national average. Over the past three years the proportion of Year 11 students achieving at least five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics has exceeded local and national averages and almost all students regularly achieved at least five or more A\* to G grades. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well as a direct result of the high quality care and support they receive. Progress is good overall but in the past two years a small proportion of average ability students in Year 11 have not achieved what they were capable of because their progress was not monitored well enough. The school has responded to this by introducing a rigorous system to monitor how well all students are doing and identify at a much earlier stage, which students are at risk of under-achieving and will require additional support.

Students' personal development and well being is good due to a well-established house system that gives students a sense of identity and belonging and provides good quality care, guidance and support. Students enjoy school, say it is a safe place to be and feel they are listened to by teachers. They know who to speak to if they have concerns and all the necessary procedures to ensure vulnerable children are protected are in place. Attendance is consistently above the national average. Most students behave in a courteous manner and display positive attitudes towards their work, each other and to staff. Participation in physical education and after-school sport promotes active lifestyles and students benefit from the school council's efforts to introduce healthier meals at lunchtimes. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Many students accept responsibility as prefects, house captains and school counsellors and make a significant contribution to school life. Students gain a greater understanding of different cultures through a range of subjects, such as religious education, drama and music and in weekly assemblies.

Teaching and learning are good. Positive relations between teachers and students coupled with high expectations and improved use of information and communication technology contribute directly to the good progress made by most students. Some lessons lack opportunities for students to engage in practical and creative learning activities. A satisfactory curriculum is enriched through a wide range of out of school

hours learning. The schools' specialist status enhances opportunities for drama, art and music and helps to promote students' appreciation of the arts through theatre productions and concerts. Some changes have been made to increase the choice of courses for a small number of less able students, but there are too few opportunities for all students to pursue vocational interests.

Leadership and management are good. A newly appointed headteacher demonstrates a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is providing effective strategic leadership during a period of transition for the school. New procedures to improve results in Key Stage 4 have not had the time or overall coordination to become fully established and impact directly on standards. Parents are supportive of the headteacher and his senior leadership team but say they would like more communication with the school and a greater involvement in school life. Effective leadership has resolved all of the issues raised in the previous inspection. There is good capacity to make further improvements and become an outstanding school.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The sixth form is outstanding. Just under half of students in Year 11 join the sixth form each year to study four AS level courses and over 90% of students stay on to complete three A2 courses in Year 13, this is a real strength of the school. Standards are consistently well above average; results in this year's examinations improved and were exceptionally higher than those achieved locally and nationally. Entry requirements into the sixth form and a probationary period for all new students illustrate the school's high expectations of them and ensure they are suited to the rigour of studying at advanced level. Their personal development and well being are outstanding. They are actively encouraged to participate in sport, acquire key skills and seek advice on future careers and university entrance. There are no pathways to pursue vocational study. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Students develop exceptional working relationships, teachers set high expectations, share their detailed subject knowledge and regularly meet with students to monitor their progress.

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

- Ensure that new procedures for monitoring student progress are coordinated effectively and become firmly embedded throughout the school so all students meet the challenging targets set for them.
- Provide further opportunities for students to pursue vocational interests in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- Continue to promote regular communication with, and involvement of parents.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are consistently above the national average. In 2006 over 90% of students achieved the national expectation in mathematics and science and forty-five students gained level eight in mathematics which is well above average. Results in English fell by 2% but remained above the national average with 85% of students achieving Level 5 or higher. In Key Stage 4 the proportion of students achieving at least five A\* to C grades in GCSE examinations fell from 69% in 2005 to 65% in 2006. In general, boys and girls achieve similar results and students with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well. The school has implemented new monitoring procedures to help all students achieve their very best and meet the more challenging targets it has set itself in 2007.

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

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school, attend regularly and respond positively to the 'blue book' system of rewards and consequences to promote good behaviour. Students say that it is a friendly school, they feel safe and that the few incidents of bullying are handled effectively by heads of house and through awareness-raising projects led by the school council. They value the house system and all students get involved in fund-raising events for their recognised house charity. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles is reinforced through regular personal, social and health education lessons. The school has responded to issues raised in the previous inspection by actively seeking the views of students through the school and house councils. Students develop literacy and numeracy skills that will aid their future economic well-being but have too few opportunities to develop an understanding of business and enterprise.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations and use their extensive subject knowledge to challenge and extend students' learning. Effective planning and questioning helps to motivate students to work hard which leads to good progress being made. The majority of teachers apply the agreed behaviour management strategies with consistency. Learning is enhanced through greater use of information and communication technology, and an increasing number of teachers use it with

confidence to stimulate and engage learners. Some lessons fail to capture student interest because too few opportunities are planned for hands-on learning or because teacher-talk dominates the lesson. Most students know what their personal targets are but the marking of books does not always provide them with advice on how to improve their work. Regular assessments and homework are used to set targets and monitor student progress, and most parents comment favourably on the improved reports they have received. New monitoring procedures are beginning to highlight the 'border-line' students who are at risk of under-achieving so that teachers can prepare additional support for them.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

A satisfactory curriculum provides students with a broad range of GCSE and Advanced level courses but only two vocational courses. All students study a modern foreign language and information and communication technology. Gifted and talented students in Key Stage 4 benefit from specialist teaching of separate sciences and a significant proportion sit the GCSE mathematics examination in Year 10. Flexible arrangements, including work experience are made for a small number of students for whom GCSE courses are inappropriate. Many students engage in the broad enrichment programme which adds to their enjoyment of school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Care, guidance and support are good. The pastoral care provided through a well established house system is very good; for example each head of house receives progress reports on individual students' attitudes and behaviour and any concerns for students are raised in regular staff briefings. Fewer students have been excluded this year due to an improved system to resolve issues within school. Pastoral heads and support staff liaise regularly with external support agencies to ensure all vulnerable students are suitably looked after. The school works with the Connexions service to provide all students with careers advice. The majority of teachers provide students of all abilities and interests with study support through lunchtime and after school 'help-lines' that are highly valued by students.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is empowering other staff by distributing responsibility to his senior staff for increasing curriculum choice and

flexibility, raising achievement and managing change. Decisive action has been taken to remove the weaknesses in procedures for monitoring of student progress, and to raise achievement in Key Stage 4. The headteacher recognises the limitations of the current curriculum and is leading collaborative arrangements for the expansion of vocational courses for 14 to 19 year-olds in the area. Governors show a clear understanding of the schools' priorities and recognise the need for change. Specialist status is facilitating greater community involvement and creating wider opportunities within the enriched curriculum for students to participate, achieve and excel in a range of arts- based activities. Resources are deployed effectively and the school achieves 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>	<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>	2	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
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	1
<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	1

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

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

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

10 January 2007

Dear Students

Wymondham High School, Folly Road, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 0QT

Earlier this week I, and another inspector visited your school and found it to be a good school with an outstanding sixth form. Your contribution helped me form this judgement, so thank you for allowing me to join you in lessons and talk with some of you. I particularly enjoyed meeting with a range of students and chatting over lunch with a group of Year 10 boys who articulated well some of the reasons why Wymondham is such a good school.

The key strength of your school is that it regularly achieves high standards in GCSE and A level examinations. It is a caring and supportive environment in which to learn and teachers provide a wealth of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and the arts which many of you participate in and thoroughly enjoy. You volunteer your time to become prefects, house captains and school counsellors and wear your badges with pride. You told me this is a friendly school where students and teachers respect each other and that students are keen to help others by fund-raising for their house charity and helping to organise events in the school. This makes a significant contribution to the strong school ethos and is very much part of what makes a good school.

I have asked your senior teachers to do the following things to improve the school further:

- Firmly establish the new arrangements for monitoring how well you are doing so all students meet the challenging targets set for them.
- Offer more vocational courses in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form for those of you who wish to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for the world of work.
- Continue to promote regular communication with your parents to let them know how well you are doing and what developments are taking place in school.

The headteacher and his senior staff lead and manage your school well. You can help them to make further improvements by asking your school council to share your views about the school with senior teachers. Once again, thank you for your kind welcome and I wish you all well.

John Mitcheson Her Majesty's Inspector