



Taverham High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121181
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 292044
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Seath HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Beech Avenue
School category	Community		Taverham, Norwich
Age range of pupils	12–16		Norfolk NR8 6HP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01603860505
Number on roll (school)	861	Fax number	01603261525
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Margaret Garwood
		Headteacher	Mr Graham Porter
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
12–16	1–2 November 2006	292044

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Taverham High School is a comprehensive school situated close to Norwich. It has very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds, the majority being White British, and less than 1% of students do not have English as their first language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is low, as is the proportion who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has specialist sports status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It has many good features and a pleasant and welcoming campus, which is well-maintained and equipped. Much new building work was taking place at the time of inspection. Resources are good, and the school's specialist sports status has encouraged good links with the community. Students have many opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, particularly sport. Students feel safe at the school, and behaviour is generally good. The amount of bullying is low.

Students entering the school generally have higher than average attainment and have achieved well at feeder schools. They leave the school with good GCSE results, usually better than the national average. This represents satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment when they started at the school. The school does not sufficiently challenge students to progress better so that achievement can become good rather than satisfactory. Although many students have targets, they are not made aware of precisely how they should achieve them so that their progress is good. Provision for gifted and talented students is not effective enough in catering for the needs of this group.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has recently undergone a period of instability and change, and planning processes have not yet been sufficiently effective in setting, monitoring and driving up standards. While the school's self-evaluation is broadly satisfactory, it does not identify and share its own good practice rigorously enough to improve the rate of students' progress. The evaluation of teaching and learning in particular needs further development to ensure that the good curriculum is delivered to students effectively. Changes are in hand, but it is too soon to be sure that they have been successful.

The personal support given to students is effective, and the school has significant strengths in the way a rich curriculum is planned for all of its students. Steps taken to address behaviour issues have been effective. However academic support to challenge students is less effective and has led to satisfactory, rather than good, progress overall.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors observed more satisfactory teaching than good teaching but no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is aided by good resources and the effective use of teaching assistants. Vocational provision is well developed. A few courses are offered at the school itself and students have good opportunities to pursue a variety of others in local further education colleges.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the extent to which all students are challenged through target setting and ensure that they are clear about the steps they should take to improve.
- Develop provision for gifted and talented students so that it helps to improve their achievements.
- Improve planning, target setting and monitoring by managers.

- Improve the evaluation of teaching and learning so that it accurately identifies improvement priorities.
- Develop mechanisms for the identification and sharing of the best practice across the school and between subject departments.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. While students achieve high standards in their GCSEs, the school does not set sufficiently demanding targets for its students; as a result their progress overall is satisfactory.

When students enter the school in Year 8, most have already reached a level of attainment above the national average with a significant proportion of those achieving the highest levels. They progress well at Key Stage 3, and the school adds good value to their education at this stage. In 2005 their progress at this key stage was significantly better than the average for similar schools. The progress of students in all three core subjects was particularly strong when compared with their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, with mathematics showing consistently good performance.

At Key Stage 4, though students achieve well in the core subjects of English and mathematics, overall progress is around the national average. For most students, progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 is satisfactory, and this was confirmed by classroom observations during the inspection. While this measure of overall progress declined in 2005, English and mathematics continued to perform well. The more able boys progress well. The progress of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory.

In 2005, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to C, at 67%, was 10% above the national average. This was in line with the expectations for these students given their high prior attainment. Overall, many subjects had pass rates higher than the national average. For modern foreign languages, however, the proportion of students who obtained the highest grades in 2005 was significantly lower than the national figure.

In 2005/6, the school's own data indicate that the proportion of students achieving the highest grades A* and A, and the proportion of those achieving grades A* to C declined for most GCSE subjects. Overall, the proportion of students achieving grades A* to C declined by around 5%.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are good. Students enjoy being a part of school life and this is reflected in good attendance. The level of participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities and sport is high. Behaviour and the attitudes of students towards each other and to adults are good. The introduction of the 'time out' room has proved effective in reducing poor behaviour.

Students' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and students value relationships with each other and with adults. The school council has been effective in helping to plan school transport and is currently being remodelled to ensure greater participation from all students. Students are aware of and adopt safe practices and healthy lifestyles. Healthy food options are available and promoted well to students. Work in citizenship, in personal, social and health education, and through 'curriculum enhancement week' gives students the knowledge and understanding necessary to stay healthy and safe. Students develop good skills that will contribute to their economic well-being through a wide range of activities which enrich their experiences. There are many opportunities for students to display active citizenship and make a positive contribution to their community. For example, they demonstrate awareness and understanding of the needs of others in the local, national and global communities through fund-raising activities and are able to develop leadership qualities in working with younger students.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to teach with confidence. Relationships between students and with teachers are positive and contribute to students' achievement. Students have good attitudes to learning and work well, both collaboratively and in discussions. When teaching assistants are present they provide good support for students who need it. However, lesson planning does not systematically take into account the learning needs of all in the lesson, and students are not challenged to learn as effectively as they could. Progress in lessons is satisfactory. Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for students to be actively involved in their classes. The marking of work is too variable. In the best examples, teachers clearly indicate what students are doing well and set improvement targets. However, too often teachers write generalised comments without making clear how students can reach higher standards. The school does not yet have a coordinated system for tracking progress across subjects and setting targets from Year 8 to Year 11. This is holding back students from developing a good understanding of how they can improve. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are too limited at subject level. The identification and spreading of good practice are insufficiently developed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Inspectors agreed with the school's own evaluation that the curriculum and additional activities are good. Students in Years 10 and 11 benefit from well established links with local further education colleges and many attend courses there which include vocational and workplace elements. These have a positive effect on encouraging students to attend school regularly and many progress onto higher level college courses

when they leave school. Social and careers education through the programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. The specialist sports college status results in physical education (PE) and sports having a high profile. There is a good variety of PE activities and the possibility for students to gain accreditation as sports leaders. These contribute to students adopting healthy lifestyles. There is good emphasis on raising awareness of issues with an international dimension, such as through the school's membership of Amnesty International and in the annual curriculum enhancement week. Students appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities, which include music and sporting clubs, dance, drama and the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Provision for students with particular gifts and talents does not sufficiently stimulate the more able students to achieve higher standards. Enterprise education is also too limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Arrangements for care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school has good relationships with local middle schools and with families prior to their children starting at the school. The support for induction and transition is effective. The needs of vulnerable students are managed well using established teams of staff, and they involve external professional support where appropriate. The needs of individual students with learning difficulties or disabilities are identified at an early stage. The Special Educational Needs department and specialist dyslexia support centre (SpeLD) are both well led and managed and are effective in supporting the students who need them. Support from the Connexions Service, which gives career guidance to young people nationally, is good. The introduction of the vocational curriculum at Key Stage 4 has enabled students to be given real choices at this stage in their school careers and to begin the process of considering the possible routes available beyond the school. Risk assessments are performed throughout the school and are reviewed annually.

However, while care, guidance and support have a number of strengths, academic guidance is not effective in providing or enabling students to reach challenging targets by making good or better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a good ethos in which staff are well supported by the headteacher and leadership team. As a result, they have a sense of common purpose and work well together to promote students' achievement and well-being. However, planning is not robust enough in guiding the actions of departments and of the school as a whole in meeting challenging targets. This was also a weakness in the last inspection which has not been remedied. The school's focus on planning has been diverted during a period of instability and change in senior personnel.

The school's evaluation of its own performance is satisfactory. Examination results are analysed carefully and used to improve provision. Targets for examination performance are set on the basis of robust data, but the progress towards meeting them is not monitored sufficiently. The performance of most subject departments has been thoroughly reviewed, and this has led to improved practice. However, the outcomes of evaluations are not used sufficiently in planning further improvements. In addition, evaluations of teaching are not drawn together to identify staff training needs. The school intends to use its evaluations in future planning and to implement an annual process of planning and review, but these plans are at an early stage.

Subject leaders respond well to the trust given to them. Through the departmental review process, they have become more rigorous in evaluating their own work. The senior leadership team provides good support, but does not check departmental work regularly enough to assure that it is consistent in quality.

Governors are well organised and well informed. They are very supportive and check many aspects of the school's work effectively as far as their role allows. On the basis of the current effectiveness of its leadership and management, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

3 November 2006

Dear Students

Taverham High School, Beech Avenue, Taverham, Norwich, NR8 6HP

Most recently, I visited your school with three other inspectors. During this time we sat in on many of your lessons, we talked to some of you, met with teachers, and looked at a lot of your work. We also received a large number of completed questionnaires from your parents. We were all impressed with your courteous and helpful behaviour, and we would like to thank you for this. The school has many strengths, and one of them is you.

Your school is a successful one in that, when you leave, there is a good chance that you will have good qualifications so you can go on to further study if you wish. The links which the school has with local colleges are well developed, and many of you will go on to work-related courses. Many of you do sports and activities outside of school and you are fortunate to have such good facilities.

One of the things we found out was that, although many of you do well, the school could help you to do even better. You are not always clear about how you should go about this, and what steps you need to take. Some of your parents were concerned about this as well. The school agrees with us, and will be making changes to make sure that you are given every opportunity to be even more successful, including those of you with particular talents. For this to work, you need to play your part. This means not only working hard, but making sure that you understand exactly what you need to do in each subject to bring this about, both with homework and what you do in class. Teachers will help you with this, but if you are not clear then you should ask.

You told us that you enjoy most of your classes, particularly those that you find interesting. One of the ways that the school can improve is to make sure that the staff carry out more checks on teaching and that the best lessons are shared throughout the school so that teachers can swap ideas. You told us that the amount of bullying is very low, and that it is dealt with quickly if it happens. You can help to keep it low by talking to teachers if you are affected.

We wish you all well, and thank you once again.

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools.