

# Long Stratton High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121160
<b>Local Authority</b>	NORFOLK
<b>Inspection number</b>	302337
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynne Blakelock

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	646
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sue Simpkin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Adams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Manor Road Long Stratton Norwich Norfolk NR15 2XR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01508530418
<b>Fax number</b>	01508531708

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average comprehensive school. It serves nine local primary schools and is situated in a rural area to the south of Norwich. It was awarded specialist school status for mathematics and computing in September 2006. An extensive building programme is underway to improve provision for learning. Students start with standards which are slightly above average. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of educational need. The number from minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language is very low. The school has been awarded Sportsmark and Artsmark.

## 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 is providing a satisfactory quality of education for its students but is striving to develop and change in order to improve what it offers to students. The school's recent designation to specialist status, which is increasing the opportunities available to students, is evidence of its ambition. However, the impact of its work is not yet fully realised so that students' progress is currently satisfactory. The school has made adequate improvement since the last inspection, provides satisfactory value for money and demonstrates sound capacity to improve.

The school is led and managed satisfactorily by the headteacher who has worked hard to move the school forward and improve the learning environment. He and his senior team understand the needs of the school but the planning and monitoring of its performance by managers at all levels is not yet rigorous enough to result in high levels of consistency and a substantial strengthening of practices. Governance is sound. Governors provide a satisfactory level of support because they know the school reasonably well and are increasingly involved in its work.

Standards are generally above average, but when taking into account student's attainment on entry, achievement is satisfactory. The standards attained in 2006 were above average at both key stages and exceptional in English. The current Years 9 and 11 are reaching standards above those typically found and are on course to reach the targets set for them. Examination results in 2006 showed that progress was good from Key Stage 3 to 4 and satisfactory from Key Stage 2 to 3. The variation is due in large part to the limited use made by some teachers of information on pupils' entry levels. This tends to lead to a slow start for some students in Key Stage 3.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All teachers know their subjects well and relationships between students and teachers are positive. In the main, learning is only satisfactory because work set does not meet closely enough the wide range of learning needs in mixed ability classes and, therefore, does not enable students to make consistently good progress. Furthermore, not all teachers regularly inform students of the levels at which they are working or how they can improve their work. Nevertheless inspection findings indicate that there is some good teaching and a small amount which is outstanding. In these lessons teachers' expectations are high and as a result students are particularly keen to learn. Students make good progress, benefit from the challenges set and make the most of opportunities to learn in groups or independently.

The curriculum is sound. It has improved since the last inspection and is now providing a broader range of subjects, including vocational courses, to match more closely students' wide range of abilities, interests and aspirations. Specialist schools status is also resulting in new and relevant courses, but the provision for gifted and talented students varies too much across subjects. Students enjoy taking part in lunchtime and after school activities, which offer a reasonable range of additional opportunities for learning.

Students' personal development is satisfactory, as characterised by their behaviour and attendance. A growing number are taking on responsibilities, which help them to develop important skills needed for adult life and which aid the local community. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. They feel well cared for and inspection evidence confirms that good procedures are in place to ensure their health and safety. The tracking of students' progress is sound, although students in some subjects have patchy knowledge of the levels they are working at, their targets and how to make further progress.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress, particularly from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, by ensuring that teachers consistently take into account information they have about student's level of attainment at the beginning of each year.
- Ensure a closer match of learning activities in order to meet the needs and aspirations of all students, especially the more able.
- Make sure that targets set for students are more specific and clearly understood so that they can take greater responsibility for their own progress.
- Ensure that managers at all levels have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which will drive improvement and enable greater consistency in the school's performance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are achieving satisfactorily from their starting points. The standards they reach are above average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. A consistently high standard of teaching means that students make outstanding progress in English throughout the school. Examination results at Key Stage 4 were above average in 2006. In addition to English, students did well in mathematics and they performed strongly in food technology, graphic design, and information and communication technology (ICT). Students' progress was good. National test results in 2006 at Key Stage 3 showed a more varied picture, demonstrating satisfactory progress at this key stage. Results were above the national average in English and science but were below the national average in ICT. Although they were in line in mathematics, more able students performed less well than those in similar schools. Specialist schools status is making a positive impact on standards in Key Stage 3. However, mixed ability teaching groups make it harder for both the mathematics and ICT departments to achieve their targets at higher levels. Inspection findings concur with the analysis of information collected by the school pointing to specialist school targets being met in 2007.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Most enjoy school and mix well with one another. They enjoy the social and teamwork opportunities which school provides. Students say that any issues, such as bullying, are dealt with thoroughly. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The cultural and spiritual development of many is held back by limited opportunities to apply their curiosity and look beyond their own immediate environment for inspiration and example. A number of parents expressed concern that learning is disrupted by students who become restless when teaching does not engage them. However, inspection findings show that behaviour is at least satisfactory around the school and in lessons. Attendance is broadly average and is improving due to recent measures introduced by the school. Students have a good community spirit which is particularly evident through their growing commitment to expressing their views on the school and in their participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. They are aware of issues of personal health and safety and

actively participate in sporting activities and those for keeping fit. They are well prepared for the world of work, good skills in English and mathematics combine with effective work experience.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although there is some good and, occasionally, outstanding teaching, there are noticeable inconsistencies. As a result, the overall quality of students' learning is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They structure their lessons well and generally share objectives with their students. Consequently, the vast majority of students have good attitudes to their studies and want to learn. They enjoy the way teachers use computers to make learning more interesting. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations are high and sharp questioning encourages students to think more deeply. There is a brisk pace with not a moment to waste, so that students work busily in groups or independently. However, lessons for mixed ability classes do not always provide sufficiently challenging activities, particularly for the more able. As a consequence, some students become disinterested and lesson time is not used productively. There is some very good marking which clearly informs students on ways to improve but in contrast other marking is less detailed. Some teachers set homework that extends learning and challenges students, but parents have commented that it is set and marked irregularly in some subjects. These inconsistencies limit the school in its ability to help pupils work hard and give of their best at all times.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. At Key Stage 3, it is enhanced by a second modern language and a study skills course. Students are benefiting from the improved resources for ICT. The personal development programme throughout the school informs students well about lifestyle issues and prepares them effectively for their future lives although there is scope to provide more physical education opportunities. At Key Stage 4, there is a sound range of GCSE options with appropriate plans to extend the current limited range of vocational courses. A small number of students have work-related learning at a local college and new courses, resulting from the school's specialist status, are beginning to enhance curriculum provision. For example, there are new GCSE mathematics courses and a new ICT course which has improved the uptake of these options by girls. The school is part of a post-16 twilight course initiative along with partner schools in ICT (Oracle) that includes video conferencing facilities. This is of particular benefit to gifted and talented students in mathematics but currently provision for them in other subjects varies. There is satisfactory provision for students with learning difficulties. Students enjoy the satisfactory range of lunchtime and after school clubs, which include good coverage of sporting activities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Pastoral care is good because robust procedures are in place to safeguard students and staff are committed to providing a supportive environment to address students' concerns. Parents generally agree but some desire greater

communication between home and school. Transfer from primary education is sound, with some particularly good practice in supporting the transfer of vulnerable students. A range of programmes, including the involvement of external agencies, ensures students are well guided in making choices at ages 14 and 16. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support for their emotional and behavioural difficulties and for problems with literacy. However, support for these students in the classroom is not always effectively targeted on learning activities and this leads to some relative underperformance by such students. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed, but students would benefit from more specific targets put in place promptly. In some subjects students are clear about the levels at which they are working but in other subjects they do not have enough understanding of how to take responsibility for moving on in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. This has translated into actions, as seen in the school's successful bid for specialist status and the dramatically improved accommodation and facilities for learning. The senior team knows the school's strengths and areas to improve. They are working hard to bring about the needed change. For example, developing the curriculum at Key Stage 4 to strengthen students' attitudes to learning and open up their view of the world. However, although the headteacher has distributed leadership roles to senior staff and middle managers, their roles are not always defined clearly enough. This results in inconsistencies in the rigour and regularity of the monitoring and evaluation of the school's practice and so restricts the impact that some leaders have on students' progress. Thus the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. There has been good progress in governance and governors are now actively involved in the work of the school so that they display a better knowledge of the school and are starting to challenge its work effectively. Although the school is only in its first year as a specialist school, it is led well by the coordinator and is enabling other schools to benefit from partnership working.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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
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	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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

28 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Long Stratton High School, Long Stratton, NR15 2XR

We enjoyed meeting you recently when we inspected your school. Thank you for the help you gave us and for your courtesy towards us. We were particularly pleased to be able to talk to many of you and to hear your views about your school and the education which it provides.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. You enjoy school and like learning when lessons offer you interesting and challenging things to do. In these lessons you behave really well. You are pleased that more teachers are using computers in their teaching. It was good to see that you are being given a growing number of chances to shape the future of your school by being involved in decisions about the way it should develop. You say that having specialist school status is broadening your opportunities for learning and that the accommodation is vastly improved and making school a much better place in which to learn. We agree! Older students are benefiting a lot from the new courses which the school is offering.

Your school can improve further. Students in Years 7 to 9 do not make as much progress as students make in Years 10 to 11. We have therefore asked Mr Adams and his staff to ensure that your teachers have detailed information about the levels at which you are working at, particularly when you join Year 7, and to make sure that they use this information when they are setting work for you. This already happens in some subjects, but not all. This will mean that it will be easier for all of you to make at least good progress. We also want your teachers to ensure that you have learning targets that are clear and understood by you so that you know when you are making progress. We have asked Mr Adams to make sure that all teachers have clear roles and responsibilities in helping the school's performance to improve further. You can help your school and yourselves by concentrating in all lessons and making sure that you are enabling others to learn by behaving well. We know that most of you already do this.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector