

# The John Warner School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117597
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312667
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jennifer Brown HMI

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1161
6th form	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Keith Cockman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Kennedy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 2005
<b>School address</b>	Stanstead Road Hoddesdon Hertfordshire EN11 0QF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 462889
<b>Fax number</b>	01992 470679

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

The John Warner School is a popular 11–18 specialist science college. It obtained specialist status in September 2004. The school has expanded in size over the last few years and is slightly larger than average. A large majority of the students are White British and the proportion eligible for free school meals are well below average. Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average and the proportion with statements of special educational need is well below.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Parents, students and governors take an active part in shaping the future of the school through a variety of processes introduced by the headteacher and senior managers. School council members take their responsibilities very seriously. They have a positive influence on the school in many ways, including their contribution to the annual 'school operational plan'. Students and parents are proud of their school and its standing within the local community. As one parent said, 'The school has managed to improve attainment, but keep a commitment to educating the whole student in the true manner of comprehensive education.'

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students are thoughtful, supportive of each other and show respect and consideration for others. As a result, they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is good; a feature strongly endorsed by parents, and attendance is also good. Sixth form students are actively involved in supporting younger students and those who are more vulnerable.

Teaching and learning are improving and are good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. The school's monitoring of the quality of teaching is accurate, but not sufficiently extensive. While lesson planning is a strength, teachers are not consistently developing independent learning skills and providing feedback to students, when assessing their work, which sets out what they need to do to improve. Curriculum provision is good. Links and partnership arrangements with other providers are strong. The specialist school status in science has had a positive impact on the curriculum through improving specialist resources and the involvement of visiting speakers.

The headteacher and senior managers focus very strongly on improving and maintaining high standards. Standards are above average at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Weaknesses in Key Stage 3 standards, which were evident in 2005 and 2006, have been addressed. The school has met its broader specialist school targets, but has not yet met the challenging targets it set itself for raising standards in science and increasing the numbers of students studying science in the sixth form. The sixth form has increased in size since the last inspection. Systems and processes to support students have improved. However, standards and achievement, though satisfactory, do not build sufficiently on the high standards obtained in the main school.

Monitoring and evaluation of student achievement are improving through the expansion to the whole school of a process called assertive mentoring, successfully implemented with Year 11 students. Recent appointments to a number of senior and middle management posts have strengthened management capacity in the school. Line management arrangements are strong.

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. It knows itself well, has a strong capacity to improve and provides good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

The quality of provision in the sixth form is satisfactory and improving. As one student said, 'Our sixth form aims high, and is getting better every year'. Standards overall are average and students make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 13. Current data for Years 12 and 13 indicate the majority of students are on track to meet their targets. Not all students experience good teaching and this is holding back progress in some subjects. Attendance continues to be

below average. However, the head of the sixth form is enhancing strategies to raise attendance levels. Students appreciate the learning support that continues in the sixth form and find it very helpful.

Students' personal development is good, with some outstanding opportunities for them to develop leadership skills through for example, membership of the governing body. The developing curriculum is good and enriched by consortium links, which give greater flexibility to meet a range of needs. Students have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They interrogate national and global issues through their general studies and critical thinking courses. Their active community work raises significant funds for their chosen charities. Work experience offers a good insight into the world of work and students' future economic well-being. In the previous inspection, a lack of independent learning was an issue in the school. This continues to be the case for the sixth form, and students identified this as a problem when they started A level studies.

New leadership and management since September 2007 continue to build on the groundwork initiated by the previous post holder.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in the sixth form to match those in the rest of the school.
- Embed the development of independent learning skills throughout the school and ensure these are underpinned by assessment that consistently makes it clear to students what they need to do to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The standards students attain by age 16 are high. Information provided by the school shows that standards continue to be high in most subjects in 2007. The percentage of students attaining 5A\*-C grades, including English and mathematics, improved significantly, to well above the national average. Standards are particularly high in English, mathematics, double science, business studies, history and music, but are below the national average in art, drama, and resistant materials. Standards in vocational subjects, such as applied science and health and social care, are low. Students make good progress between the ages of 11 and 16.

Standards at Key Stage 3 have improved in 2007 and are above average. The greatest improvement has been in English, but higher ability pupils and girls do not achieve as well as other groups in science. For the last two years, pupils have not been making the progress they should between the ages of 11 and 14, but improvements in attainment in 2007 has improved this situation. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities only make satisfactory progress. This is because in some lessons, teachers are making insufficient use of strategies set out in individual education plans to meet the needs of all pupils.

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

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The vast majority of students behave well and are polite,

confident and self-assured. The school works hard to improve the behaviour of a minority who find it difficult to conform to expectations. The school's 'alternative learning environment' provides a calm and supportive atmosphere and is effective in reducing exclusions. Students say bullying and racist incidents are rare and quickly dealt with if they occur. Students are keen to take on responsibilities, for example, they willingly train as 'bully busters', 'student counsellors' and 'reading partners'. Their contribution to the school and local community is outstanding. Students are considerate of others and demonstrate this through their frequent fund-raising activities, which raise large amounts of money for their chosen charities.

Students have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives. Large numbers take part in the extensive range of sports activities on offer; they choose healthy foods and demonstrate a good awareness of keeping themselves safe in relation to sex, drugs and smoking. They generally behave safely in lessons and around the school. Students' awareness of the multi-cultural society they live in is not yet fully developed, but they benefit from visits to France, Germany, Italy and the developing links with a Chinese school. Participation in enterprise activities and work experience, combined with positive attitudes and good academic standards, prepares students well for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. Teachers enjoy positive and supportive relationships with their students. They have a good knowledge of their subject and the examination requirements. In most lessons, curriculum time is maximised through well considered planning which results in a good pace to the work. In a small number of lessons, teachers fail to deal effectively with low levels of disruptive behaviour and the work lacks sufficient pace and challenge. In the sixth form, teacher talk dominates the work of some classes and the teacher does not always cater for the spread of ability in the class.

Written feedback on students' work is inconsistent, but the provision of regular assessment through the e-School database is beginning to have a positive effect on teaching and learning. Students are generally aware of their target grades but less clear about exactly what they must do to meet these targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the varying needs of most of its students. Statutory requirements for religious education are now met; an area for improvement in the last inspection. The science specialist status has had a positive influence on the curriculum through significant improvements in accommodation and resources for science and enhanced Information and Communication Technology facilities. Skills in literacy and numeracy are well developed across the curriculum.

Curricular links with local primary schools are excellent and this aids students as they transfer to the secondary school. The school has begun to offer vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and

partnership arrangements with the local college and strong links with other post-16 providers ensure a wide range of progression pathways are available to students. Plans are well underway for the introduction of the new specialist diplomas in 2008.

The school has a strong programme of extra-curricular activities and events including external visits, performances, festivals, concerts, sports and a variety of clubs including homework and revision clubs.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents appreciate the very effective induction procedures, which ensure Year 7 students quickly settle into the school. Vulnerable and minority ethnic students, including those from the Traveller community, have access to good quality advice and support. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Students say they feel safe and they value access to a counsellor who comes into school every week. Careers advice is good and has improved since the last inspection. Materials for personal, social and health education have also improved, but teachers' skills in using them effectively are variable. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have well written individual education plans, but not all teachers use them to best advantage when planning lessons. Systems for monitoring students' academic progress are improving and Year 11 students are benefiting from the implementation of assertive mentoring.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher shares his passion for learning with the senior leadership team and faculty leaders. He set a very clear direction for improvement and his demanding approach to delegated management has successfully challenged leaders to raise standards and achievement, and secured good personal development across the school. All managers have a clear focus on what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. For example, the school has correctly identified inconsistencies in teaching at sixth form level that have restricted progress. Research and development activities undertaken by many staff, as part of their professional development, have raised expectations, improved teaching and have boosted learners' self-belief. A hard working and knowledgeable governing body who have an excellent approach to strategic management effectively support the senior leadership team's work.

The school maintains a strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. However, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as most other students and there are variations in the progress of boys and girls. The management of resources, including finances, is effective. Successful bids for additional funding, for example for the sports centre, have enhanced the school's facilities. While the school's science specialist status has had a positive effect on resources, it is not yet an integral part of planning in all departments.





## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
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?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

<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>	2	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
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	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

12 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of The John Warner School, Hoddesdon, EN11 0QF

Thank you very much for making us so welcome and for the way in which you shared your views with us, both in formal and informal meetings and within lessons. We could see that the relationships between yourselves and the teachers at the school are very good. You told us how proud you are of your school and that you appreciate that senior staff listen to and act on your views. You attend a good school and we are certain that your headteacher and his senior staff have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has many strengths and we were particularly impressed by:

- the way the school is led by the headteacher and senior staff
- the hard work undertaken by the governing body
- the improvements there have been in standards at GCSE since the last inspection
- the thoughtful way you support each other and show respect and consideration for others
- the active part you, your parents and the governors play in influencing the future development of the school
- the effect the school's specialist status has had in improving resources in science.

To make your school even better we have recommended that:

- standards and achievement in the sixth form are raised to match those in the rest of the school
- the development of your independent learning skills occurs more consistently throughout the school and is underpinned by assessment that makes it clear to you what you have to do to improve.

On behalf of the inspection team thank you for making our visit so enjoyable and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Brown HMI

Lead Inspector