

# Wayland Community High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121158
<b>Local Authority</b>	NORFOLK LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	313900
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Seath 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>	Secondary
<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	725
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Caroline White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Rose
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Merton Road Watton Thetford Norfolk IP25 6BA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01953 881514
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Wayland community high school is a mixed comprehensive school for students aged 11–16. Students' standards on entry are average, although in many cases, literacy is weak. Many students come from the surrounding rural area, which has some social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of students who claim free school meals is below the national average but many more do not claim their entitlement. There are few students from minority ethnic groups. The school has specialist technology college status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Wayland Community High is a satisfactory and improving school with good features. Recent improvements in achievements and standards have brought them close to national averages with an improving trend across the school. Previously poor results in English are improving. However more able students do not achieve as well as they should because they are not always stimulated to do so.

The school has developed effective target setting and monitoring systems to measure students' progress and these have helped with the improvements seen in standards. However these are not matched by precise targets for the improvement of teaching and learning, or for ensuring consistency when homework is given. Across the school, standards of teaching and learning vary significantly. Systems to identify and share the best practice across subject areas are underdeveloped.

The school cares for and supports students very well, particularly those with specific learning needs. Transition arrangements are very effective, and the school's 'gold' group enables those students at risk of underachievement to receive more support. As a consequence these students achieve well and show good progress. However this good support is not matched by challenge, particularly to the more able. The school has a good curriculum which gives good literacy support and enables many students to succeed. Students are able to access a good range of vocational provision including that provided by local further education colleges. Technology college status has benefited students significantly.

The school has addressed most of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, including underachievement by boys. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the headteacher is well supported by staff. The school has a clear agenda for improvement so that standards improve further. Based on recent improvements and extensive monitoring of progress, the school offers satisfactory value for money and has demonstrated a good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Place a greater emphasis on the monitoring of learning during lessons and classroom observations.
- Ensure the consistency of achievement across the school by the systematic identification and sharing of best teaching and learning practice.
- Raise the attainment of all students, in particular the more able students.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory with recent improvements evident. When students enter the school in Year 7 their prior attainment is around average, though inspectors observed that many students entering the school have poor standards of literacy. Progress and standards improved markedly at Key Stage 3 in 2007 and are now satisfactory. Despite this they remain below expectations in English and the proportion of students achieving the highest levels is generally lower than it should be. Results for mathematics and science improved to above the national average.

At Key Stage 4, the proportion of students who gain 5 or more grades A\* to C is below the national average, though when English and Mathematics results are included it is just above

average. In 2007, results for English and mathematics improved to well above the national average. Progress has been poor in recent years with many students not achieving in line with expectations. However in 2007 there was a marked improvement in progress so that many students exceeded expectations.

The school has recently introduced a more rigorous target setting and monitoring system for students. Though it is too soon to be sure of its impact, early indications are positive and students report that they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Until recently, girls achieved higher standards than boys. The school has now addressed this imbalance successfully. Good care and support ensure that lower ability students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. However, there is too much variation between the standards achieved in different GCSE subjects and the proportion of students who achieve the highest grades A\* and A is too low.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being of learners are good. The majority of students are well behaved and get on well with each other. Occasionally a minority of students, mainly boys, can be disruptive in class when they are bored. Parents have expressed concern about poor behaviour disrupting the learning of others in some classes. Most students have a good sense of right and wrong and understand fully the consequences of inappropriate behaviour and are considerate to their peers. Spiritual, moral and social development is good. Success is celebrated throughout the school.

Students feel safe and secure, including those with behavioural and learning needs. The school has a comprehensive and effective approach to supporting the most vulnerable students. As a result their self-esteem, attendance and achievement are good. Recent initiatives to monitor and improve attendance have been successful and it is now slightly above the national average. Bullying is rare, and students report that it has declined significantly in recent years.

Many students make significant contributions to the local community and the environment. Students are enthusiastic about the 'Eco-bugs' scheme which has many members. This group makes significant contributions to raising awareness of environmental issues. Leadership skills are developed through the Junior Sports Leader Award, the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and the highly effective School Council.

The school recognises the need to improve study skills and has undertaken a number of initiatives to do this. For example, it has an innovative approach to the Year 7 curriculum with a focus on learning skills. Students are developing many basic skills for later life, particularly in the use of computers and their awareness of multi-cultural issues has been developed through activities such as 'parents cooking days'.

Students are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle with an outstanding range of sport and leisure activities and a good range of eating options.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. When teaching and learning are successful, students of all abilities are challenged and supported to reach their potential through a variety of resources, activities and learning styles. Helpful links are made with learning in other subject areas particularly where teachers are able to make good use of their extensive subject knowledge. Learning support assistants are skilled at supporting learning. In good lessons, students understand how to improve and resources are tailored to their individual needs, for example in the 'Gold' group classes. Active use is made of classroom displays to support literacy and learning, for example in English and information technology where exemplar materials show students how to gain the best marks and make progress. Questions allow students to extend their thinking and learning. Students enjoy these lessons because they are given opportunities to use a range of learning styles.

Most lessons are well planned. However a significant number focus on what students should do rather than what they should learn, and this learning is not always checked. Some teachers are beginning to involve students in assessing their own learning and that of their peers, and this is successful. Regular assessment is undertaken and student progress is very effectively monitored using a 'traffic light' system. However this information is not always used to best effect in class and a significant number of lessons do not have high enough expectations of what students, particularly the more able, can achieve. Students often have too little opportunity to participate and not all classes have an ending which allows them to reflect on and consolidate their learning. Sometimes, the pace of lessons is too slow and this can lead to a lack of motivation and some poor behaviour. Homework is not set consistently.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum which meets statutory requirements. In Years 7 to 9 it is broad and includes four areas of design and technology and two modern foreign languages. Effective literacy support is provided for identified students through the 'Gold' group and communications lessons. Enterprise activities develop the skills pupils need for their future economic well-being. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have access to the full range of GCSE options. In addition they can study vocational GCSE's or undertake a vocational education programme including work experience and a college placement. Combined with the school's willingness to offer subjects even where the number of interested pupils is very low, this means that the needs and interests of pupils of all abilities are met. Year 10 students enjoy two weeks of work experience and effective citizenship lessons promote safe and healthy lifestyles. Across the school there is a very good range of well attended enrichment activities which make a strong contribution to the students' enjoyment of school life and to their physical well-being. Gifted and talented pupils have access to an increasing range of appropriately challenging extension activities.

Specialist technology status is having a positive impact on standards. ICT resources have improved and pupils have greater access to ICT across the curriculum. It has also led to better monitoring of pupils' progress and has encouraged the school to take on new initiatives and work more closely with partner schools and the local community.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance are good. Students with learning and behavioural needs are identified early and supported well. Learning assistants are effective in supporting students in class and work well with teachers. All students have access to an adult should they have problems at school and there are safe areas for them to go during the day. Effective one-to-one counselling provides additional support for all who require it. The school's behaviour policy has a range of cautions linked to consequences, which ensures that all students are treated fairly and that they understand the likely outcomes of poor behaviour. However students report that this is not consistently applied across the school. The school works hard to keep parents informed of issues and problems and when students do well. It has a shared specialist parental advisor team which works effectively with families. Students are able to attend a range of academic support sessions, together with exam revision. Students speak highly of the support they receive.

The school's 'traffic light' system has contributed significantly to raising standards. Students are aware of the levels they are working at and they know what they need to do to improve to reach their targets. The school has an effective rewards system which has contributed to the raising of boys achievement and works well with outside agencies to support the most vulnerable. Child protection procedures are robust and meet current requirements, although not all governors have been trained in child protection. The school has an effective system for assessing and managing risk.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and Management are satisfactory with strong emerging features. The headteacher provides an energetic lead, which has resulted in a supportive school with a good ethos. A clear pattern of improvement is evident which is well supported by managers at all levels. This has resulted in marked improvements in achievements in 2007, and many indicators are now around or just below the national average. Early indications are that progress, which was very poor in 2005 and 2006, improved in 2007. Standards have improved so that mathematics and science are now above the national averages, though there remains a weakness in English especially at Key Stage 3. Newly qualified teachers are well supported through effective mentoring and coaching, and they are encouraged to take on responsibility.

The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is largely accurate and provides a good basis for improvement. The school recognises the importance of improving achievement and standards further; however there is little action planning to show how teaching and learning will be improved to achieve this, and the system of lesson observations gives too little emphasis to assessing learning.

Data is increasingly used to set challenging targets, and this has improved markedly in the last year. The monitoring of progress towards targets is very well developed, particularly for individual students or groups where it falls below that expected.

Initiatives to secure school and subject improvement often sensibly involve collaboration with other schools. However, whilst good practice is often shared within individual subjects, it is seldom shared between other subjects or across the school. Departmental planning and monitoring are effective and the school has extensive action plans to address weaker areas.

However, these are often insufficiently precise about how teaching and learning will be improved so that all students are stimulated to improve.

Governors bring a range of skills to their role. They are well informed, effectively challenge poor performance and have been supportive of recent management changes. Financial management is good. The school has good and growing links with the local community and other institutions. Links with other schools and colleges are well developed and benefit students, for example in the provision of work related provision and experience. Collaborative arrangements with other secondary schools are extensive, for example joint appointments, working groups and shared training opportunities.



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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	2

### 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 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	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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?	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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

21 September 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Wayland Community High School, Norfolk, IP25 6BA

Earlier this week I spent two days at your school with three other inspectors. We talked to many of you, visited many classes, and looked at the work you do. Throughout this you were polite and helpful, and I would like to thank you for that.

Your school is improving. The headteacher and staff have made many changes which are leading to better education and success for you. We found that the school gives good support to those of you who need help, and that it has improved the ways in which it measures your progress so that you can improve more. We were also impressed with your 'Ecobugs' and your active school council as well as the sports and other opportunities available to you.

We have asked the school to do a number of things to improve further. For example, we have asked that the school looks at ways to challenge and stretch you further so that you achieve higher standards, and more attention will be paid to your learning. In addition, we have asked that efforts are made to ensure that you receive more consistent homework. Some of your parents were concerned about this.

We have also asked that teachers swap the best teaching ideas so that you are able to learn in more ways.

One of the things you told us, and which we saw in the school, was that in a minority of classes, poor behaviour by a minority of students, mainly boys, disrupts the learning of others. Again, some of your parents were concerned about this. We have asked that the school looks at ways to prevent this, and you can help in this process. You also told us that the amount of bullying is low. You can help keep it this way by talking to teachers if you are affected.

Your school has a number of strengths, and one of them is you. Remember that you have a big part to play in the improvement of your school, and in your education. Once again, thank you for your help in the inspection and we wish you all well.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Seath

Her Majesty's Inspector of schools