

Framingham Earl High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121163
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313901
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Anthony Knight HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	803
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Julian Foster
Headteacher	Ms Nicola Furneaux
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2004
School address	Norwich Road Framingham Earl Norwich Norfolk NR14 7QP
Telephone number	01508 492547
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Age group	11–16
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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

Framingham Earl High School is a smaller than average secondary school with 805 students aged 12 to 16 years. The social background of the students is above average and the proportion eligible for free meals is well below the national average. While there are a few students from minority ethnic groups all students have English as their first language. The overall proportion of students with learning difficulties is below the national average and there are fewer students with a statement of special educational need.

The school has specialist status for Sport. It has achieved Sportsmark and Investors in People. The school is involved in many initiatives including developing sports partnerships with other schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Framingham Earl is a good school where students show excellent respect for each other and for the staff. These positive attitudes arise from the strong community ethos developed by committed staff and led by a dedicated senior leadership team.

While achievement and attainment are good overall there has been a fall in the progress made by students over the last two years. This occurred during a time in which there has been some instability in the senior management of the school. However, this fall in progress is being addressed and progress seen in lessons was good overall. The new headteacher has made a significant impact already on the school and there is good capacity for further improvement.

The sports status makes a major contribution to the quality of education provided by the school. Students are very appreciative of the wide range of excellent sporting opportunities that have helped them achieve outstanding personal development and well-being. However, while students benefit significantly from taking responsibility in extra-curricular activities, opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons are sometimes missed.

Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons, work is matched well to the different learning needs of students so that all are given appropriate support and challenge. However, this is not consistent within and across subjects. Students are not always clear about their targets and how to improve their work.

Care, guidance and support are good with some outstanding features, particularly the individual personal development of students. However, the school is aware of the urgent need to improve the quality of the assessment information and ensure that it is used effectively to raise standards further.

The overwhelming majority of parents expressed high praise for the school but a minority has some concerns mainly about behaviour and the extent to which the school takes account of their views and the views of students. Some parents rightly expressed concern about the annual reports. The school is well aware of these concerns and is ensuring that they receive renewed attention.

Leadership and management are good and good progress has been made since last inspection. There is secure financial management. The school provides good value for money and recognises the need to improve the learning environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share excellent work in order to improve consistency in the way work is matched to students' different learning needs.
- Urgently improve how assessment information is collected and used to raise standards.
- Enable more active involvement of students and parents in the learning process.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Students attain standards significantly above national averages in Key Stage 3. Attainment on entry is above the national average and students make particularly good progress in mathematics and science. The progress made in English has

not been as strong as mathematics and science over the last two years and students achieve standards just above the national averages.

Attainment in Key Stage 4 is good. The percentage of students achieving at least five GCSEs including English and mathematics increased in 2007 reflecting an improvement in the English results. However, the percentage of students achieving at least five A*–C grades fell in 2007, although it remained above national averages.

While some of the school's challenging targets were missed in 2007 and the overall progress made by students during their time in the school fell over the last two years, good progress is now being seen in lessons. Students with learning difficulties are also making good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of students is outstanding. They demonstrate excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and most are involved in extra-curricular sporting activities in addition to the two hours all receive in the curriculum. Increasing numbers of students eat the healthy options provided at lunchtime.

Students enjoy learning, attend well and are punctual to lessons. Their behaviour around school is exemplary. All feel safe and know who to approach if they have any concerns. While the behaviour of a small minority of students does not meet that shown by the rest of the school, actions are being taken by the school to address this. The support provided by students for each other is outstanding. During the inspection they responded with impressive maturity and thoughtfulness, showing deep commitment to the school. The school is sensibly developing the role of students in its ongoing improvement.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They are rightly appreciative of the excellent extra-curricular activities and of the opportunities to lead activities for others. However, opportunities are missed sometimes for students to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons.

Student leaders and the student council contribute significantly to the school and the wider community. The skills and attitudes developed through these opportunities prepare students excellently for life and work beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some outstanding lessons seen. Teachers generally plan lessons well and there are strong working relationships between students and teachers. In lessons where students make the most progress, teachers have good specialist subject knowledge, tasks are closely matched to students' needs and a range of exciting teaching methods employed. In some of these lessons, students are provided with good opportunities to assess their own and each other's work. Less progress is made in lessons that are unimaginative and where students are provided with insufficient opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.

Regular marking by teachers helps students improve their work and homework helps students consolidate their learning in lessons. However, there is inconsistency in the tracking of students'

progress and the school is working hard to improve this situation. While students are generally aware of the level at which they are working, they do not always know what their targets are or what they need to do to meet these targets.

Early diagnosis of students' learning needs is good because there are effective links with feeder schools. Teaching assistants work well with teachers to benefit learners. Students who have learning difficulties and disabilities are, therefore, well supported.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

All students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, in which physical education and modern foreign languages feature strongly. All students receive at least two hours of physical education and many students opt for GCSE PE and Dance. In addition, all Year 10 students are trained as sports leaders. This aspect of the curriculum has had a significant impact on students' personal development and on the school as a whole.

Provision for Citizenship has improved. It is taught in conjunction with PSHE, through a well thought out syllabus devised by a newly appointed subject leader. The curriculum provides good moral, social and cultural education that is supported well through established links with other countries. The promotion of students' spiritual development is satisfactory.

Work-related learning and the provision of vocational courses have been extended in Key Stage 4. The school has good plans to continue this development in liaison with a cluster of schools and colleges in Norwich.

The range and uptake of extra-curricular activities is outstanding. Impressively, students lead many of these activities. Stimulating enrichment and enterprise activities are also provided during the year by suspending the normal curriculum.

However, while the curriculum is good overall with some outstanding features, its impact is limited significantly by shortages of accommodation. Learning is affected adversely by lack of specialist accommodation in some subjects such as science, drama and music and by some teachers not having a regular teaching base. The lack of subject areas also works against increasing consistency of teaching within subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support with some outstanding features. Attendance levels are above national averages. Absences are followed-up swiftly and there are clear strategies for dealing with persistent absenteeism and requests for holidays in term time. Safeguarding procedures are clear and child protection systems are robust enabling those at risk to be identified swiftly and appropriate support provided.

Transition arrangements are organised well and the sensitivities of the processes of moving from one phase of education to the next are handled effectively through collaborative support and individual intervention. Vulnerable students are supported particularly well. The work of the re-integration unit enables those in emotional, medical or behavioural difficulty to be able to play as full a part as possible in school life. However, there are inconsistencies in the tracking of students' progress and in measuring the impact of intervention strategies designed to support those who are underachieving.

There is good celebration of success. Families are promptly informed about remarkable achievements and the rewards are valued by students in both Key Stages. The school has also recently introduced a new system, based on half-termly key assessments, to keep parents and carers informed regularly about their child's progress. However, the school is aware of the need to develop annual reports further so that parents and students can play a more active role in the learning process.

An outstanding feature of the provision is the way that students are an integral part of the care, guidance and support of the school. A range of opportunities empowers students towards independence and autonomy outside the classroom. These opportunities include involvement in senior staff appointments, in developing such systems in the school as an anti-bullying group, in conflict resolution as well as in decision making over types of rewards valued by their peers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leadership team deserves credit for the way they managed the school during a period of considerable instability. Appointments have now been made and the management team is complete with clear line management responsibilities. The new headteacher has already made a highly favourable impression on the school and community. She is seen by staff, students and parents to be approachable and enthusiastic and takes a proactive interest in every aspect of the school's work.

The senior leadership team works together well and gives a clear lead to the school, promoting its positive and inclusive ethos, in which students feel valued. The team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, it recognises the crucial need for a more effective system of tracking students' academic performance, so that suitably challenging targets can be set in relation to each student's potential. However, while the school's self-evaluation is accurate and detailed there is not always sufficient identification of the priorities for further school improvement.

Senior and middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching with an appropriate increasing emphasis on teaching's impact on learning. Governors provide good, constructively critical support. They contribute well to the school, for example in the care taken over the appointment of the headteacher and over the innovative provision for catering facilities that are being extended to local primary schools.

The overwhelming majority of parents expressed high praise for the school. The school enjoys a positive reputation in the community shown in the rapidly increasing numbers of students that attend the school. However a small minority of parents have concerns about students' behaviour. The school is aware of isolated instances that have generally taken place outside the school and has acted quickly and appropriately. Several parents commented on the positive atmosphere created at the beginning of this year and it is clear that the school is giving a renewed emphasis on ensuring every student meets the expected levels of behaviour. A small minority are concerned about the extent to which the school takes account of their views and the views of the students. Some parents rightly expressed concern about the annual reports. The school has good plans to increase the ways students can contribute to the school and will revise the reports so that parents and students have more information about the progress being made and can be more actively involved.

The quality of the accommodation continues to be a concern. The number of students on roll has risen considerably over the last few years and this has put increasing pressure on limited specialist teaching space. The school is sensibly planning to improve the current spaces and looking to find ways to extend the accommodation.

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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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

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.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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
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

5 October 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Framingham Earl High School, Norwich, NR14 7QP

We enjoyed coming to your school and would like to thank you for welcoming us and talking to us so openly. We were pleased to see that you enjoy being at the school and agree with your comments and the views of your parents that Framingham Earl is a good school with excellent opportunities for you, particularly in sport. Your school is rightly proud of how you behave and how many of you contribute so much to the school through, for example, the Student Association and acting as leaders. We were very pleased to see that the school wants to extend your involvement even more.

We agree that there is good teaching in many subjects and some excellent teaching. We have asked your headteacher to make sure all lessons increasingly match the best, particularly in the way that you are given the support and challenge you need to achieve as well as you can. You can help by asking your teachers if you are not sure how you could provide a better answer, or piece of work.

Some subjects have good information about how each of you are making progress and we have asked your school to make sure you always have the information you need to know how well you are doing and what you need to do to achieve at a higher level. We are pleased that your school is giving urgent attention to finding ways to bring all this information together so it can make sure it is on track to raise standards even higher. In addition, your school will develop your reports so you and your parents can see what you need to work on.

We were particularly impressed with the way you support each other and how you behave around the school. We agree that accommodation is not good enough and know your school is looking to find ways to improve this.

There are many good opportunities for you at Framingham Earl High School and we wish you every success for the future.

Anthony Knight

Her Majesty's Inspector