

# Springwood High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121178
<b>Local Authority</b>	NORFOLK LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	313909
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anthony Knight 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	1530
6th form	267
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Derrick Murphy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Hopkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Queensway Gaywood King's Lynn Norfolk PE30 4AW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01553 773393
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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

Springwood High School is an over-subscribed, larger than average secondary school. Numbers have increased significantly over the last three years. The social background of the students varies widely. The percentage eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. There are relatively few students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of students whose first language is not English is also considerably below the national average. The overall proportion of students with learning difficulties is significantly above the national average and the percentage of students with a statement of special educational need is just above average.

The school has specialist status for the Arts and has gained the Sportsmark award. It has been recognised as an 'Innovation School' for its student:computer ratio and has developed extensive links with other schools and the community.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Springwood is a good school. Skilful use of the Arts status has enabled good leadership and management to create a positive learning environment where students take pride in their work and the work of others - a significant achievement. The Arts give students confidence and help them get satisfaction and respect from doing their best. As a result, the personal development and well-being of students is outstanding.

Relationships between staff and students are very positive; mutual respect and good humour are embedded in the ethos of the school. Good teaching and good care, guidance and support ensure that students make good progress overall, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Achievement is good and students reach above average standards at GCSE. However, progress is greater in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form. The school is giving good attention to increasing standards and progress in all phases. For example, it recognises that while lessons are managed well, the learning objectives are not always clear and students are sometimes unsure how to improve the quality of their work. The good systems that have been used to track and support students' learning in Key Stage 4 are rightly going to be extended into Key Stage 3. The school has also sensibly decided to raise its targets to reflect the increasing success at Key Stage 4.

Some good improvements have been made since the last inspection, particularly in the curriculum, which is now good overall. However, some of the areas identified for development still require further attention. Financial management is good and the school offers good value for money. There is good capacity to improve.

### Effectiveness of the sixth form

#### Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory overall. However, while standards are average and students make satisfactory progress overall, good leadership and management have successfully increased the number of students staying on after the age of 16. The school monitors progress well and identifies those who are underachieving. As a result, the school is sensibly re-evaluating the provision of sixth form courses to ensure they meet the different needs of the students. The current curriculum provision is relatively narrow when compared to other schools nationally.

There are good opportunities for enrichment through all the many arts and sports activities. The annual 'Futures Week' provides a good focus for students to consider higher education and careers choices. They value the guidance and advice they receive, and feel well prepared for university life.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistent lesson planning so that learning objectives are always clear and students know how to improve the quality of their work.
- Extend the effective assessment and tracking of students' progress in Key Stage 4 into Key Stage 3.
- Continue to review the curriculum and ensure sufficient range of appropriate courses in the sixth form.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

#### Grade for sixth form: 3

Students make good progress during their time at Springwood. Good progress overall was also seen in the lessons observed.

In 2006, the 'contextual value added' index of achievement from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 was in the top seven per cent of all maintained schools. Students make significantly more progress in English and mathematics than the national average. The percentage of students achieving at least five A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, increased dramatically in 2006 to above the national average. This percentage increased again in 2007. Most groups of students achieve significantly above the national averages. The attainment of boys in particular has increased rapidly.

In contrast to the increasing standards in Key Stage 4, overall attainment in Key Stage 3 has remained the same since 2003. While the overall standards achieved in this school were broadly in line with national averages four years ago, they were significantly below in 2006 because the average attainment across all maintained schools has increased. There was some improvement in mathematics and science in 2006 but this improvement was counter-balanced by a sharp fall in the results for English. Nevertheless, the contextual value added index from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 was broadly at the mid-point of all maintained schools. In 2007, some improvement was seen in the English results and all statutory targets were exceeded. Students are on track to at least reach the school's challenging targets in 2008.

The overall value added index in the sixth form is also broadly in line with national averages. While there is good attainment in the vocational subjects, students make satisfactory progress in A levels. Results in 2007 show an increase in the number of students attaining A grades but attainment on the vocational A levels was closer to average.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

#### Grade for sixth form: 2

The personal development and well-being of students is outstanding. Students' social and moral development is excellent, as seen in the enthusiastic appreciation and celebration of each other's successes. Their spiritual and cultural development is good. Students really enjoy school and attend well. Many are actively involved in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities. There is also high commitment to continuing education and training after the age of 16.

Students' behaviour is outstanding. They are sensible and considerate as they move around the buildings and respond positively and confidently to visitors, all of which helps to create a very civilised learning environment. They feel safe and are clear about whom to contact if they need help.

Students have a good understanding of the need to be healthy, and rates of participation in extra-curricular sports activities are high, although not all students take advantage of the healthy food on offer. They enthusiastically embrace the wide range of opportunities to make a positive contribution to the community, both within and beyond school. They willingly assume

responsibility, for example through the school and house councils and through prefect duties, and respond excellently to the trust placed in them.

Students in the sixth form also contribute well to wider school life. Some take the sports leaders award, and others support younger students through hearing them read. Sixth form representatives on their council and committee organise charity fundraising and liaise over social provision.

Students' impressive personal development prepares them extremely well for life beyond school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers enjoy excellent relationships with their students and there is a strong environment for learning based on mutual trust and respect. Teachers possess good subject knowledge and communicate this enthusiastically and effectively to the students.

Lessons are managed well and students respond positively to the tasks set. Students are generally aware of their academic targets and what they need to do to improve but this knowledge is more developed in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form than in Key Stage 3. Although the majority of lessons are planned appropriately, lesson objectives and expectations are not always made clear. Consequently, students are sometimes unsure about the focus of the work and how to provide a better response. As a result, the most able students are not always stretched sufficiently. Some marking is excellent but, again, this is not consistent across the school.

In the best lessons, there is a high level of challenge and students are encouraged to work independently. For example, in a sixth form drama lesson, students were challenged to think deeply and perform to a high level, working together in a spirit of shared endeavour. However, in less effective lessons the pace is too leisurely and over-dominated by teachers' talk.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Overall, the curriculum is good. In the main school, students follow a broad and balanced curriculum that has improved since the last inspection, meets statutory requirements, and matches their needs well. The school is aware of the importance of giving renewed attention to ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of all students, particularly in the sixth form.

In Key Stage 4, the wide range of vocational and traditional academic courses leads to good achievement. Well-managed links with local employers enable some students to spend time in work-based learning and all students to gain from their work-experience placements.

Specialist Arts status has made a significant contribution to the curriculum. It has enabled the development of an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, which are popular with students. However, there has not been any analysis of take-up to confirm and celebrate success and ensure all groups of students are benefiting from these excellent opportunities.

The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship, and outside visitors contribute well to the overall programme. There is an extensive range of school trips. The curriculum provides students with good opportunities for their personal development and effectively broadens their educational experiences.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school has a supportive and caring ethos. Particularly good support is given to vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Effective induction procedures and a strong 'House System' ensure Year 7 students quickly settle into their new school. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Rigorous attendance monitoring means that parents are quickly alerted if there are any concerns.

Students say they feel safe and there is always someone to turn to if they need help. 'Fresh Start' has reduced the number of exclusions and helps students to cope with difficult situations. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support from the student support unit. They have well written individual education plans but the helpful detail given is not always reflected in teachers' lesson plans.

Good use is made of advice from a wide range of external agencies. Students say that careers advice is good. Systems for monitoring students' academic progress are good in Key Stage 4 but less developed in Key Stage 3. Year 11 mentoring by tutors is ensuring students do not fall behind with their coursework and that they remain on track to meet their targets. Younger students generally know the level they are working at, but are not always clear about the progress they are making.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are good. There is a strong team spirit and all staff work well together. With clear leadership from the headteacher and senior leadership team, the school has achieved a significant change in the attitudes and behaviour of students so that students are much more engaged in their learning. The school has cleverly used the arts to spearhead this change.

Good middle managers are individually exploring and developing effective strategies to improve learning but there has not been enough sharing of these good ideas. The monitoring of teaching has improved and the school recognises the need to give attention now to increasing consistency in the quality of planning. The school also recognises that it is important to ensure the assessment systems developed to increase attainment at Key Stage 4 are fully extended into Key Stage 3.

The school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for improvement are accurate. Staff and governors recognise the need to build on its significant success in generating positive learning attitudes by further increasing attainment across the school, including the sixth form.

The governing body provides strong support. Governors bring helpful areas of expertise to the running of the school as seen, for example, in the effective financial control.

Parents express overwhelming praise for the school. Strong support is expressed for the leadership and considerable praise for the support given to individual pupils. Parents confirm that students enjoy school. A very small number of parents have some concerns about behaviour and the extent to which the school takes account of the views of students. The school is aware of these concerns. Parents should be confident in the way behaviour has been improved significantly and how students are being increasingly involved in the running of the school.



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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	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	2	

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	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	1	
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	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
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	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	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	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	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**

16 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Springwood High School, Gaywood, King's Lynn PE30 4AW

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 Springwood is a good school with excellent opportunities for you, particularly in the arts. Your school is rightly proud of how you behave and how many of you contribute so much to the school through, for example, the school council. We were particularly impressed with the way you support each other and how you behave around the school.

We agree that there is good teaching and have asked your headteacher to make sure all lessons increasingly match the best, particularly in the way that you are helped to understand the focus of the work and how you can improve your work further. You can help by asking your teachers if you are not sure how you could provide a better answer or piece of work.

There is good information about how each of you are making progress in Key Stage 4 and we have asked your school to make sure there is similar information about the progress you make in Key Stage 3. Do ask if you are not sure how well you are doing.

The curriculum is good and there are excellent extra-curricular activities. We know your school is looking at ways it can further increase the range of courses available for you, particularly in the sixth form, so you can all succeed as well as possible.

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

Yours truly

Anthony Knight

Her Majesty's Inspector