

# Bungay High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124835
<b>Local Authority</b>	SUFFOLK LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	315078
<b>Inspection date</b>	5 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Wheeldon 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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	996
6th form	268
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Greenwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr S O'Neill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Queen's Road Bungay Suffolk NR35 1RW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01986 892140
<b>Fax number</b>	01986 895319

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector who were in the school for one day. At the same time the school's skills centre, which is located some distance from the main site, was inspected by a second Additional Inspector for half a day. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and focused on the following issues: progress and standards in Years 10, 11 and in the sixth form, the curriculum, and how the school promotes community cohesion.

Inspectors collected evidence from lesson observations, assessment data, documentation and meetings with key staff, governors and students. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Bungay High is an average size comprehensive school with a large sixth form. The school has specialist science status. It is a rural school with very few students from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low, as is the proportion who have free school meals. Very few students arrive at the school other than at the time of first admission and very few leave before they complete their education at age 16 or at the end of their sixth form courses. Entry to the sixth form is open to all, irrespective of their achievements at the age of 16.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Bungay High is a good school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding, while there are others that are satisfactory. Examination results amongst students at the age of 16 are good, while students in the sixth form make steady progress and results are broadly average.

The school is well led by an experienced head teacher and he, together with the senior leadership team and the governors, sets a strong sense of direction, with the focus very clearly on improvement. The school has a well planned self-evaluation cycle that gives teachers and key staff the opportunity to contribute. As a result, self-evaluation is generally accurate and staff know and understand the school's priorities. Most parents recognise the school is in capable hands and value the strong leadership shown by senior staff.

One of the outstanding features is the curriculum offered by the school, with a broad range of traditional academic courses and an excellent number of vocational courses. It is hard to imagine what more a rural school could offer its students at this time. Some of the vocational courses are taught in a brand new, purpose built facility located on the site of one of the partner middle schools. With the school's specialist status, all students take either double or triple science. The careful arrangement of option blocks means that whatever their aptitudes or interests students can choose a clutch of courses that match their individual needs. This is one reason why students enjoy coming to school so much.

A further reason is that the students get on so well together. Many arrive by bus, and the school has a good system of stewarding to ensure students feel safe on their way to and from school. Attendance is good. Social skills are excellent and during breaks students behave well around the school and out on the field and playground. Behaviour is generally good in lessons, although students, parents and staff know there are occasionally times when the behaviour of individuals is unacceptable. The school has introduced a better system for dealing with such incidents and, as a result, exclusions are very low. Students say there is very little bullying and if it occurred they would often turn to a sixth form buddy for help. They feel that staff deal effectively with any such incidents.

Another reason why students enjoy coming to school is the broad range of high quality extra-curricular opportunities offered, including many at the school sports centre. During out of school hours this centre is staffed by sixth formers. They take bookings and handle customer queries effectively. Parents recognise that the school's extra-curricular provision is very important in this rural area and are grateful that the school provides late buses for those who attend activities which take place after normal lesson times. Students appreciate extra-curricular opportunities, particularly the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, because there are few others nearby, and access to those further afield is limited by what they and their parents perceive as poor public transport.

In lessons, the quality of teaching is generally good and students enjoy learning. Teachers have been trained to consider different learning preferences in order to engage students more fully in their learning. Students say they prefer lessons which are varied and where they are actively engaged, and in the small sample seen during the inspection this was certainly true. They respond best when the work is challenging and they have to think for themselves. Some subjects are taught especially well, including some of the more recently introduced vocational courses. There are others that are less well taught, and some teaching is at best satisfactory. Senior

staff know where they need to focus attention and are providing support to further improve the quality of teaching.

The good teaching means that, whatever their aptitudes, pupils make good progress from age 14 to 16. Good links with partner middle schools and careful induction arrangements help students settle quickly into good working habits in Year 9. The rate of progress slows a little in Years 10 and 11, but even so, it is still better than average. Because each student follows a bespoke curriculum, almost all of them complete their courses successfully and gain worthwhile qualifications at age 16. The school provides them with excellent skills to prepare them for future education, training or employment. Students also make an excellent contribution to the school community, but they feel that the school should give them more opportunities to engage with those from other cultures and ethnic backgrounds, and inspectors agree with them. Other aspects of the students' personal development are good.

The school has a central electronic record to keep track of students' progress but in each subject teachers use different methods to monitor progress. Some of these arrangements are effective but others less so. Furthermore, even when the school identifies a student causing concern, systems are not sufficiently robust, so students are not always offered the support they need to help them improve.

The leadership of Bungay High school has changed over the last couple of years. The pace of change is good, as is the direction of travel, the capacity for further improvement, and value for money. The governing body works closely with the senior leadership team and fulfils its duties well. There is much to be proud of, including the impressive new skills centre. Throughout the school dedicated teaching and other staff provide good care and support, and students respond well. They are amiable, work diligently, and are keen to succeed. Whatever their backgrounds, the school provides all students with a safe and welcoming environment, and through the excellent curriculum teachers provide very good equality of opportunity for all.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

As in the main school, the sixth form is good with some outstanding features, such as the curriculum, and students' personal development and well-being. Achievements and standards are satisfactory, but improving.

The open access sixth form reflects the school's inclusive approach, although students who are better suited to post-16 education elsewhere are provided with good guidance. The curriculum provides exceptionally well for its students, whether on one or two year courses. For instance, the outdoor education course successfully develops the all-round skills of some of the most vulnerable students. Retention rates are very good on all courses.

Typically, sixth formers are articulate, friendly, self-confident and have a positive influence on younger students. Staff encourage them to make the most of life in the sixth form. As a result, they play a full part in extra-curricular activities, such as the school production of 'Jesus Christ Superstar', which was in rehearsal at the time of the inspection. Notably, students exert effective leadership in a variety of roles, for instance, as prefects, mentors to Year 9 students and as bus marshals.

Teaching, which is good, has a strongly beneficial impact on students' personal development. This is helped by the excellent relationships between teachers and students. Progress is not so good in Year 12 as it is in Year 13, mainly because systems for monitoring, and evaluating

students' progress are insufficiently rigorous, but this applies across the sixth form. The school recognises this weakness and is addressing it. In other respects, and overall, the sixth form is well led, with strengths in personal support and guidance about options on leaving school.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in the sixth form and continue to raise standards and achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Introduce more systematic and effective arrangements for monitoring students' progress.
- Provide students with more opportunities to engage with those from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

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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	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	2
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?	1	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?	2	1
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	2	
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	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?	1	1
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	3	
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

6 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Bungay High school, Queen's Road, Bungay NR35 1RW

As you know, I recently inspected your school, together with two other inspectors. We enjoyed meeting you and I am grateful for your honest answers to our questions.

Bungay High is a good school, well led by Mr O'Neill and his senior colleagues. Those of you in Years 9-11 are making good progress and examination results are generally good. Those in the sixth form make steady progress and results are satisfactory. We feel that the school does an outstanding job in preparing you for future education, training or employment.

The teaching is generally good, although you know it is better in some subjects than in others. Senior staff also know where the teaching should be better and they are working to improve it.

We found that most of you really enjoy coming to school, you get on well with your teachers and with one another. The range of academic and vocational subjects you can choose is outstanding, there are very few schools that do this so well. We were also impressed with the choice of activities offered at lunch times and after school.

We have left Mr O'Neill and the staff with three recommendations to help improve the school.

- Raise standards and achievement in the sixth form and continue to raise standards and achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Introduce better arrangements to monitor your progress.
- Provide you with more opportunities to meet those from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

This letter is a brief summary of our judgements. The full report is only a two or three pages, so if you would like more detail I hope you will take the time to read it.

Work hard, and do not hesitate to ask your teachers for help when you need it!

With all best wishes for the future.

Keith Wheeldon HMI