

Reepham High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121161
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327418
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony Knight HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	808
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stuart Beadle
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Hassell
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2005
School address	Whitwell Road Reepham Norwich Norfolk NR10 4JT
Telephone number	01603870328
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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

Reepham High School is a smaller than average secondary school serving the town of Reepham and a large surrounding area of rural Norfolk. Only a few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and very few pupils do not have English as their first language. The overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is in line with the national average although there are more pupils with a statement of special educational need. While the proportion of pupils eligible for free meals is less than half the national average, the school draws pupils from a wide mix of backgrounds, including pupils from areas of rural deprivation. The school has extended its specialist school status which now includes Science with a Rural Dimension, Applied Learning, and Mathematics and Computing. It is part of a federation of four Norfolk High Schools and is heavily involved in Initial Teacher Training, leading the Suffolk:Norfolk SCITT in Technology. It has received many awards including the DCSF Award 'International School', the Schools' Curriculum Award and awards for industry partnerships. It is a full award holder of Healthy School and has Artsmark Silver. The school is preparing for the addition of a sixth form in September 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Reepham High School provides outstanding educational experiences for all its pupils. There is a strong sense of shared pride in what has been achieved and excitement about the future as the school moves towards the opening of the sixth form in 2009. The school is well prepared for this development and is giving appropriate attention to developing central systems that, for example, will make it even easier for staff to monitor the work of pupils and students across the wider age range.

Excellent leadership has enabled the school to build on its success in the last inspection and develop aspects of provision that act as a model for other schools. The excellent links with other schools, parents and other adults as well as local industry demonstrate how the development of a wider learning community can have such positive impacts on the progress pupils make. The emphasis on applying learning to 'real life' situations in all subjects is also extremely effective.

The strength of the school is built on positive relationships. All work together so that there is synergy of everyone's contribution. Most impressive is the development of mutual respect that underpins all aspects of school life. Pupils are rightfully fully involved in all aspects of the work of the school and staff work together with shared responsibility, constantly seeking to find ways to improve provision even further. As a result, pupils attain high standards and make outstanding progress, academically and personally, from excellent teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support. The school has ensured that the outstanding features of teaching seen in many lessons are shared across the school and recognises the need to ensure pupils always know what to do to provide an even better response. The only improvement that pupils feel could be made is to ensure homework is always balanced across subjects so that they can manage their work-load more easily. Pupils feel completely safe and make healthy living choices. They not only fully enjoy school, but also, most significantly, value learning. They make an outstanding contribution to the community at local, regional and international level. Their preparation for life beyond school is of the very highest order.

The developing specialist status has contributed much to the success of the school. Specialist targets were broadly met in 2008. Financial management is secure and the school offers excellent value for money. The school shows outstanding capacity for improvement. This is a remarkable school where everything reinforces excellence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to share features of outstanding teaching so that, for example, pupils always know what to do to provide an even better response, and ensure homework is always balanced across subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress during their time in the school. They join the school with attainment that is broadly in line with the national average but attain standards significantly above the national average when they leave. Pupils who find learning more difficult also make excellent progress. Observation of a range of lessons confirmed the outstanding progress made by pupils.

Standards have improved overall since 2005. Results in Key Stage 3 are consistently above national averages, particularly in mathematics and science. Attainment in Key Stage 4 is also significantly above the national average and many pupils achieve the highest grades. Results in 2008 showed continued improvement overall with 74% gaining at least five A* to C grades at GCSE and 59% including English and mathematics. Results also showed individual improvement in English and mathematics.

The school's challenging statutory targets for 2008 were exceeded in Key Stage 4 and broadly met in Key Stage 3. Pupils are on track to reach the increased targets for 2009.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils attend regularly and behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the extensive opportunities they have to consider spiritual issues, especially in assemblies, to take responsibility and to link with pupils in schools in other parts of the world. They have an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe and they eat healthily. They thoroughly enjoy school and are appreciative of the extensive range of enrichment activities provided.

Trained pupils staff the Active Listening Forum and provide excellent support to their peers. This support adds significantly to the secure, family feeling around the school. Pupils say there is always someone who will listen.

The school council meets regularly and pupils rightfully feel its work is very important. They are an extremely confident group of young people and are an integral part of the school's organisation. They are involved in the appointment of new staff and are beginning to be consulted on the quality of learning and teaching. They organise numerous charity fund-raising events throughout the school year and decide how donations will be distributed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teaching is at least good in all major respects and is exemplary in significant elements. There is an excellent learning culture, underpinned by very positive, mature relationships among pupils and with teachers. Pupils have excellent attitudes and are eager to learn. Much learning is based on applying skills and knowledge in a work-based or other 'real life' setting. As a result, pupils see the value of what they learn as preparation for their future lives. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. They have excellent subject knowledge and expertise that underpins their clear, detailed and in-depth explanations. Many lessons are characterised by engaging, lively activities that capture pupils' interest and enable them to develop independent and team-working skills. These lessons often include resources that appeal to pupils, such as well-judged projected slides. Regular marking supports the high quality of learning in most lessons, with constructive comments enabling the pupils to know how to improve their work. Occasionally marking is too general and there are missed opportunities in some lessons to make completely clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work further. Pupils are also right to ask the school to keep a close check on the setting of homework, so that the demand across all subjects is always balanced.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has made significant improvements in curriculum provision since the last inspection and it is now outstanding. Applied learning is at the heart of all recent developments and specialist school status has enabled the curriculum to extend beyond the school into the wider community.

Pupils are given an outstanding range of stimulating and appropriate learning experiences and opportunities. For example, Year 7 pupils are starting to use an impressive 'Learning Passport' that includes recording progress in broader learning skills, such as teamwork. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of options at Key Stage 4, including the extensive range of vocational courses. These are tailored to meet all pupils' learning needs and aspirations through excellent collaboration with local colleges. Examination fast track routes are available for the more able pupils.

An extensive and rich range of after-school activities and visits supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils are able to develop new interests, take part in high quality competitive sports and study for additional qualifications. The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a strong feature of this work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has an excellent supportive and caring ethos. Pupils, particularly the most vulnerable and those who find learning more difficult, receive outstanding care and support. Effective form teacher mentoring procedures, together with a well-established pastoral system, ensure that pupils settle in quickly and progress through the school. Attendance is excellent and close monitoring ensures that parents are quickly informed if there are any concerns.

Care, guidance and support involve the whole school: staff and pupils. All pupils know that they can ask for extra help from every teacher and make full use of opportunities provided at lunch times for additional support. Pupils are helped to make a significant contribution to care, guidance and support in a variety of innovative ways. For example, the senior pupils receive excellent training that enables them to lead the Active Listening Forum.

The school works extremely well with outside agencies to ensure pupils are given every opportunity to succeed. This includes well-judged career guidance so that all pupils are fully informed about the options open to them. Safeguarding procedures within the school are secure and the school provides an extremely safe environment. The care, guidance and support are best summarized by a quote from a Year 11 pupil: 'There has never been a day that I have woken up without looking forward to coming into school'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Pupils and parents are right in giving high praise for the dedicated leadership of the headteacher and commitment of all staff. Responses in the parental questionnaires demonstrated remarkable support for the school. Many parents provided moving testimonials about the positive impact the school had had on their children. Hardly any parent expressed any concern. The school has

clearly acted on comments made by parents and sought to increase their involvement in the school, not least through the extremely effective development of the learning community. Staff are also very happy in the school and are given every opportunity and encouragement to extend their skills and influence. For example, the science department is recognised regionally as being a lead department in teaching 'Thinking Skills'.

The school has cleverly sought new opportunities as part of its long-term vision and used these skilfully to maintain momentum following its success in the previous inspection. Excellent management of the school's specialist status has led to improved resources and extensive partnership work. The strong links made with other schools and industry are helping to increase stay-on rates. These links also do much to develop community cohesion. The school not only takes a leading role but also helps partners develop their expertise. Different parts of the community are brought together through skilful identification of need and emphasis on mutual benefit. For example, the school provides courses for local industry and helped local businesses design their logos. In return, businesses help provide tasks for applied learning.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and there is a clear and well-constructed development plan. A constant drive to improve provision led to the improved judgements for the curriculum and teaching and learning. The governing body provides excellent support, playing a key role in the development of the sixth form and in increasing the positive profile of the school in the community.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Reepham High School, Reepham, NR10 4JT

It was a delight to visit your school and we would like to thank you for welcoming us and talking to us so openly. What struck us most strongly was the mutual respect there is between you and your teachers and how much this helps you all enjoy and value learning. There is no doubt that Reepham is an outstanding school.

Teaching is excellent because teachers share their ideas and constantly strive to make learning relevant and stimulating. We have just asked your teachers to make sure you always know what you need to do to provide an even better response or piece of work. In response to the request of your excellent school council, we have also asked your school to check that homework is planned carefully across subjects so that you can balance your own work-load and always give the work the attention it deserves.

It is clear that your school has your best interests at heart and knows what you need. Each one of you has helped the school become outstanding in all respects and has a key role in maintaining, and developing, the high quality of education that you receive.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Knight

Her Majesty's Inspector