

# Long Stratton High School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	121160
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339885
Inspection dates	16-17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Abbott HMI

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

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Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	650
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Collins
Headteacher	Dr Paul Adams
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2007
School address	Manor Road Long Stratton Norwich NR15 2XR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 36 lessons, including 14 visited briefly during 'learning walks', and held meetings with students, governors, senior leaders, heads of year, heads of subject, classroom teachers and other staff. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, various policies, monitoring records, incident logs and other documents, including students' work. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by 150 parents, 55 members of staff and 450 students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent of improvement evident in the 2009 examination results
- the extent to which teaching and learning had improved in response to the previous inspection report
- how well bullying and behaviour incidents are dealt with by the school so that students feel safe and can learn without distraction
- the effectiveness of teaching and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they achieve as well as possible
- the school's understanding of its duties in respect of equal opportunities and community cohesion.

## Information about the school

Long Stratton High School is a specialist mathematics and computing school, serving a largely rural area which contains pockets of rural deprivation. The school has active partnerships with the Long Stratton cluster of schools and is part of a consortium of three schools and two colleges that are planning diploma courses to start in 2010. It also has partnerships with two local colleges, a bank, the local co-operative society and a local garage. Around 5% of students receive free school meals; 2.5% are from minority ethnic groups and 15% have recognised special educational needs and/or disabilities. All of these figures are below average. However, 3% of students have statements of special educational needs, which is a little above average. The school holds the Artsmark and Sportsmark awards and has Healthy Schools status.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

## Main findings

Long Stratton High School provides a satisfactory education for its students. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is now good. Pastoral staff have a good knowledge of the students in their care and keep a close eye on those who are vulnerable for any reason. Child protection arrangements are effective and the school makes all the necessary checks on adults working in the school. School records show few incidents of bullying, reflecting the well developed anti-bullying strategy. The school now has an 'inclusion room' which is helping students who have difficulty controlling their emotions and behaviour. Since the last inspection, support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is better organised and more effective. There are some strengths in students' personal development and well-being. For example, students are well prepared for the world of work and their future economic well-being because they reach above average standards in English, mathematics and the use of information and communication technology (ICT). In addition, they develop good habits of regular and punctual attendance and benefit from good work experience opportunities. Most students and a large majority of parents agree that the school helps students to prepare for the future.

The GCSE and other examination results for 2009 show a sharp increase compared to 2008. A major factor in this improvement has been the school leaders' decision to put greater emphasis on academic guidance. In the last year, careful monitoring of students' progress by heads of year and by subject leaders has identified students at risk of underachievement. A programme of support involving staff at all levels has meant that many students, particularly those in Year 11, have met quite challenging targets. Consequently, the provisional 2009 GCSE results are above the national average. Nevertheless, students' attainment is judged to be average overall, because results had previously been falling since 2006.

The senior staff have set out a vision in which the school is held in high regard locally and seen as a leader in its specialist subjects of mathematics and computing. They have made satisfactory progress in embedding their ambition, particularly in the specialist areas. The school gives students opportunities to take up to five GCSEs in its specialist subjects of mathematics and ICT, as well as providing other specialist ICT courses. In the last year, better academic support outside lessons has contributed to a rise in results, but the school's improvement plans have not been sharply enough focused to ensure real improvement in some other aspects. For

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example, leaders and managers have not had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching and assessment. This is partly because they have not tailored their approach to different subjects, and partly because they have not persevered with or adapted their action plans until the desired improvements have been secured. The school's capacity for further improvement is therefore satisfactory.

While the best teaching and assessment is good and occasionally outstanding, the majority is satisfactory. Many lessons have long periods dominated by teacher talk, with too few opportunities for students to think for themselves or discuss ideas with their neighbours. Often, work is pitched at the level of the average student, so that the more able have to complete tasks they find quite easy before they are given appropriately demanding work. Students do not always know how to improve their work. Consequently, the majority of teaching leads to satisfactory rather than good progress in lessons.

The school's schemes for promoting disability, race and gender equality do not meet statutory requirements. Formal planning in these areas and for community cohesion is underdeveloped. The school's promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, because the school monitors its performance to ensure that outcomes are at least satisfactory for different groups of students. However, the school does not adequately plan or evaluate its contribution to community cohesion within and beyond the school. This is reflected in the limited experience that many students have of meeting other people in Britain with beliefs, cultures and experiences that are different to their own.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by
  - identifying more precisely where improvements are needed
  - setting clear improvement targets that indicate how the improvements will be measured
  - ensuring that action plans are sharply focused on the desired improvements
  - persevering with and adapting action plans until the desired improvements have been secured.
  
- Improve teaching and learning by working with departments or individual teachers to raise the proportions of lessons where
  - work is well planned to meet the full range of students' learning needs, based on good prior assessment information
  - students are actively engaged through a variety of imaginative learning activities and understand how to improve their work
  - teachers are good at adapting their teaching during the course of the lesson in response to students' particular needs.

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- Improve the promotion of community cohesion and equal opportunities by
  - setting out action plans that take account of the school's context and make a clear contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly their understanding of people in Britain whose beliefs, cultures and experiences are different to their own
  - ensuring that its disability, race and gender equality schemes meet statutory requirements.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Standards are typically a little above average when students join the school, and have recently varied between average and above average at age 16. Progress has therefore been satisfactory overall and for different groups of students, such as those receiving free school meals and students from minority ethnic groups. Recently, boys have made slightly better progress than girls. Students achieve satisfactorily in lessons because they are competently taught and because those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support. Students enjoy learning and they make good progress in just under half of their lessons.

Specialist school targets for ICT have been exceeded in each of the last three years. In mathematics, where nearly all students took two GCSEs in mathematics, the proportion getting at least one grade C was just below the target in two of the last three years, but was well short in 2008.

Most students behave well in lessons and around the school. There are no recent permanent exclusions and few fixed term exclusions. However, only 59% of the 450 students who returned questionnaires agreed that 'behaviour is good at my school'. Students interviewed by inspectors reported little bullying and said they felt safe. However, in the questionnaire, a small minority of 18% of students disagreed with the statement 'I feel safe when I am at school'. The school's annual surveys of student views have previously suggested more positive feelings among students.

Many students contribute to the school and local community, for example through the student leadership scheme, through the local youth forum and in the school's award-winning anti-bullying activities. More than half of all students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Students' good attendance is a strength. They are well prepared for the future. Their moral and social development is good, and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Students learn about healthy lifestyles, but do not always reflect this in

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their choices. Despite the school's efforts, only half agreed that 'the school helps me to be healthy'.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teachers help students to know what they should be learning and how to improve. These lessons have a spark that captures students' interest, helping them to engage enthusiastically and make good progress in learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to assess students' understanding and are therefore quick to recognise where a change of approach is necessary. More often, as explained in the main findings, teaching is satisfactory but results in a slower pace of learning.

A recently introduced assessment system has improved teachers' and subject leaders' knowledge of how each student is progressing. Although this is still at an early stage of development, it is already having an impact on staff confidence and is raising expectations. Nevertheless, the quality of teachers' written and verbal feedback to students remains inconsistent and some opportunities to improve students' understanding are missed.

The curriculum meets satisfactorily the varying needs of different groups of students, preparing them soundly for the next stage of their lives. Enrichment activities include a programme of visits and visitors, a strong Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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and a series of specially focused days covering themes such as enterprise. However, there are too few opportunities within the curriculum to expand students' cultural experiences or to fully develop their spirituality.

In addition to the strengths of care, guidance and support already mentioned, the school provides well planned and appropriate advice at times of transition, helping students to think about their futures. This is reflected in the above average proportion of leavers who progress to education, employment or training. The Inclusion Unit is providing a range of good support for vulnerable students, including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a clear focus on raising standards and they understand the need to broaden the curriculum and to improve teaching and assessment. The most successful change has been to improve academic guidance. Ambitious targets are set for students, based on their own previous performance and data about the typical progress achieved in successful schools. Middle managers now monitor students' performance and provide extra support for those falling short of their targets. This approach helped to improve examination results in 2009 and middle managers are motivated to seek further improvement. The overwhelming majority of staff are proud to be part of the school and know what the school is trying to achieve.

The governing body has very good information on students' progress and the quality of provision. For example, they are aware that, in some subjects, as many as half of the students are not on target for good achievement, and they have asked some tough questions of senior leaders. Despite this strength, governance is judged satisfactory because the school has overlooked some of its statutory duties regarding equal opportunities.

As explained in the main findings, the effectiveness of school leaders in driving other improvements has been less convincing. For example, their promotion of 'assessment for learning' has been expressed in rather fuzzy terms that not all teachers have been able to translate into action. Furthermore, the school has not appreciated how its promotion of equality and community cohesion might be used to improve students' spiritual and cultural development.

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The school engages satisfactorily with parents and carers. For example, the great majority of parents attend open evenings and the school has revamped its website and increased the frequency of newsletters. Nevertheless, parents' views about the school are less positive than average.

The school manages its finances effectively, makes good use of resources and maintains its premises in a safe condition. The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures are good in nearly all respects, but the school has not always recorded the dates that vetting checks were made, something that is now a requirement. It is addressing this deficiency as a matter of urgency. Taking into account the outcomes for students, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

## Views of parents and carers

As illustrated in the table below, a very large majority of parents are happy with their children's experience at the school. Most agree or strongly agree that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. However, a quarter of those returning questionnaires disagreed that the school helps them to support their children's learning. Slightly more disagreed that the school is well led or deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Several parents commented that they did not get enough information from the school.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Long Stratton High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 150 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 650 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	24.7%	96	64.0%	11	7.3%	2	1.3%
The school keeps my child safe	27	18.0%	98	65.3%	14	9.3%	1	0.7%
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	18.0%	82	54.7%	20	13.3%	2	1.3%
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	21.3%	86	57.3%	14	9.3%	2	1.3%
The teaching is good at this school	27	18.0%	89	59.3%	14	9.3%	0	0.0%
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	12.7%	85	56.7%	30	20.0%	7	4.7%
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	9.3%	92	61.3%	28	18.7%	4	2.7%
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	14.7%	92	61.3%	14	9.3%	2	1.3%
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	12.7%	98	65.3%	12	8.0%	4	2.7%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	14.7%	71	47.3%	29	19.3%	11	7.3%
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	14.0%	74	49.3%	27	18.0%	7	4.7%
The school is led and managed effectively	14	9.3%	82	54.7%	31	20.7%	11	7.3%
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	20.0%	90	60.0%	13	8.7%	4	2.7%

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



18 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Long Stratton High School, NR15 2XR

This letter is to tell you about the outcome of your school's recent inspection. First though, I would like to thank all of you for the warm welcome we received when visiting your school, and to thank in particular those of you who spoke to the inspection team.

Long Stratton High School provides you with a satisfactory education and looks after you well. Teachers know you well and keep a close eye on students who are vulnerable in any way. You treat each other with respect and bullying is rare. A large majority of you develop good habits of regular and punctual attendance. Most of you and your parents agree with us that you are well prepared for your future lives and the world of work.

The GCSE results went up strongly in 2009, after the school introduced a better system to monitor your progress and better support for those falling behind. Standards are now a little above average.

The senior staff want the school to be well thought of locally and to be a leader in its specialist subjects of mathematics and computing. They are making some progress in achieving this aim, but further improvements are still needed in teaching and assessment. For example, you do not always get enough advice on how to improve your work, and sometimes you have to listen to the teacher for too long instead of thinking for yourselves or discussing ideas with your peers.

I am sure that you want your school to get even better. Following the inspection, we have asked the senior leaders to:

- make sure that the school achieves the improvements that it has already planned, especially the improvements in teaching and assessment
- come up with better plans for how the school will contribute to community cohesion and promote equal opportunities
- make sure that you all get a good understanding of people in Britain whose beliefs, cultures and experiences are different to your own.

I wish you and your school all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott HMI

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