

# Cromer High School and Language College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121209
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	339898
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Godfrey Bancroft

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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	529
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Fincham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Glyn Hambling
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Norwich Road Cromer Norfolk
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 36 lessons and 32 teachers were seen. Discussions were held with governors, staff and students. Inspectors looked at school documents, including plans for improvement, data about attainment and progress, minutes of governors' meetings, a range of policies and 210 parental questionnaires.

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

- evidence to support the school's assertion that standards and students' progress are improving
- how senior leaders and governors evaluate the school's work and identify areas for continued improvement
- evidence to illustrate the improvement in attendance and the reduction in persistent absences
- the impact of the specialist language college status on students' progress.

## Information about the school

Cromer High School and Language College is a smaller than average school. The percentages of students known to be eligible for a free school meal and the proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are broadly average. However, the percentage of students who have a statement of special educational need is significantly higher than usually found. This is because the school has its own learning support centre that caters for the needs of students from around the locality who have learning difficulties. There are very few students of ethnic minority heritage or who speak English as an additional language. The school has specialist language college status and holds the Artsmark and Sportsmark awards.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Cromer High is a good school. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This is because since the last inspection the effective work of the headteacher, senior managers and governors has raised standards and successfully developed many areas of the school's work. Many parents and carers have very positive views and appreciate the school's work. One comment was typical of many in saying, 'I have had four children pass through the school. They have all done well. The staff are dedicated and provide an excellent service.'

Over the last two years a remarkable transition has taken place. Standards have risen from being below average to above average and students achieve well. Many students in the current Year 11 entered the school with below average attainment. They are making exceptional progress and are on course to attain an above average percentage of A\*-C GCSE passes, including English and mathematics. There are several reasons for these improvements. The headteacher and senior leaders have taken very effective action to drive up the quality of teaching. Teachers focus strongly on ensuring that students are fully aware of the levels and grades they are achieving and know what they need to do to improve their work. Swift identification and prompt action support any student showing signs of falling behind. The quality of care, guidance and support for all students is outstanding. Above all staff have worked tirelessly to drive up the level of attendance and to eliminate persistent absenteeism. A governor summed this up well in saying, 'By turning up and accessing the good teaching students are doing better.' The school works effectively to support students' personal development. As a result they show good attitudes and behave well. Even so, in some lessons the skills students need to make their learning even better, such as contributing to group work or sustaining their effort, do not have a high enough profile.

Many students start school with relatively low basic literacy skills and standards in English are improving dramatically. However, not enough attention is given during some lessons to promoting students' speaking and listening abilities or providing direct support for the improvement of their writing. The school's specialist language college status is impacting effectively on students' learning. Standards in French, German and Spanish are improving. Language status is also creating some good opportunities for students to understand the wider world and to gain insights into other cultures and beliefs.

Arrangements to evaluate the quality of the school's work are robust and accurate. Rising standards, better teaching and the contribution the school makes to its community are all part of a strong track record of promoting improvements. Together they provide a powerful indicator of the school's good capacity for senior managers and

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governors to promote continued improvement in the future.

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

- Make sure the promotion of students' basic literacy skills and the development of their personal learning becomes a prominent feature of every lesson by:
  - including specific learning objectives for these features of development in lesson plans
  - drawing students' attention to these objectives at the beginning of lessons
  - analysing progress and refocusing on the objectives at appropriate points during lessons
  - ensuring that students' progress in respect of the objectives are reviewed towards the end of each lesson and that students play their part in this process
  - recording students' progress in respect of these objectives.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Many students explained how they enjoy their learning and are pleased with the progress they are making. They particularly appreciate the rewards they receive, the ways in which teachers celebrate their successes, praise their efforts and explain how well they are doing. Students' positive attitudes are contributing well to rising standards. Progress in lessons is good. Records tracking students' attainment and the work in their books affirm they are on course to attain above average standards in GCSE examinations in terms of A\*-C passes, including English and mathematics. The results will be the best ever for the school, with the majority of students having made outstanding progress. In addition, students who have special educational needs make good progress. This overall pattern shows every sign of being sustained in subsequent years. Work in lessons and teacher assessments reveal a similarly positive picture in Year 9, the end of Key Stage 3. Here, standards in English are broadly average and those for mathematics and science above average.

Students report they feel safe in school and are well informed about the risks and challenges they might face. Ninety four per cent of students who responded to the inspection questionnaire said they felt safe in school. They are also knowledgeable about the importance of eating healthily and many of them readily access the wide range of opportunities provided for them to take exercise. For example, in partnership with local clubs the school has set up cricket, golf and tennis academies for students. There are many examples of students making a positive contribution to their community. For example, they maintain an allotment, contribute to the Safer Neighbourhood Team and play a proactive role in the Junior Town Council. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. The school's theme of the week provides students with a spiritual dimension and opportunities for reflection. The achievements of former students in the world of work are given a high profile, providing inspiration. Former students also return to school to act as mentors. Well developed

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personal and social skills, coupled with rising standards, mean students are well placed to continue their education or take up employment. A key contributor to this is the dramatic rise in attendance that has taken place during the last two years.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and the use of assessment to support learning is an excellent feature. Marking is often helpful and encouraging. The vast majority of students know exactly what their grades or levels are in every subject and are clear about what they need to do to keep on improving. Lessons are planned well, with content matched closely to students' learning needs and often capturing their enthusiasm and interest. Students find clear expectations, explanations and feedback helpful. At times, opportunities to capitalise on the development of students' speaking and listening and other basic literacy skills are either missed or not used fully. This is mainly because not enough attention is given to these features in teachers' planning. Similarly, whilst the school does much effective work to enhance students' personal development and promote essential learning skills, teachers do not always build on this work by capitalising fully on

<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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opportunities during lessons.

The curriculum is good and has been modified effectively to ensure the needs of all students are met. It offers a thoughtfully constructed balance and range of academic and vocational learning opportunities. A good range of additional activities, especially in the arts and in sport, supported by visitors to the school and educational visits, enhance students' learning well. Specialist language college status has a significant impact. For example, as part of the programme of additional activities students can opt to learn Mandarin and Russian.

Individual students and their needs are well known to staff and students have confidence that should they experience any difficulties, either academic or personal, they will receive help to overcome them. Students who face challenges to their learning, including those who have statements for their special educational needs, are supported very well and make good progress. Teachers are prompt to respond effectively to the slightest sign of any student falling behind. Others, who because of their circumstances, might otherwise struggle are also supported well. Partnerships with those who provide additional support from beyond the school are excellent.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior leaders are showing a strong unity of purpose to bring about improvement and are determined not be distracted from their aim. Accurate and astute self-evaluation means the most important areas for development are identified at an early stage. These processes are based on very accessible yet highly sophisticated procedures for tracking students' attainment and progress. For example, the gap between boys' and girls' attainment and progress has been narrowed considerably. The girls continue to do well, but the success of outreach visits to feeder primary schools and the careful focus on boys' learning needs during lessons means they are doing much better than in the past. In addition to improvements in attendance the headteacher and senior managers have focused closely on improving the quality of teaching, which they have done with great success. Throughout these developments the governing body have provided good support. They are helping to raise the profile of the school in the community. Governors are knowledgeable about what needs to be done to maintain the current pattern of improvement and are great advocates for all aspects of the school's work. Governors also work effectively to ensure that all safeguarding

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requirements are in place to ensure that students are as safe as is reasonably possible. Senior leaders are not afraid to set very challenging targets. This year the school is on course to achieve its targets for examination passes. In terms of specialist college targets, although slightly below the expected level, the targets are much closer to being achieved than in previous years.

The school engages well with parents and carers and mechanisms to share information about students' progress are good. For instance, the school has provided parents and carers with access to information about their children's progress via an internet based 'learning gateway' free of charge. All staff work very effectively to eliminate any form of discrimination and to ensure equality of opportunity for all. An effective contribution is made to the promotion of community cohesion, underpinned by the school's specialist language college status. Outreach work with feeder primaries and partner schools is proving to be increasingly effective. Links have been set up, through the Specialist School's Achievement Programme, with a highly successful school in Wakefield, enabling teachers to visit and work in each other's classrooms. Further afield there are well-established links with schools in Spain and in China. Strong partnerships with the local authority and projects, such as 'Gaining Ground' have all played their part in raising standards.

Resources are managed effectively to ensure that good value for money is provided. The fabric of the school and staff and pupils have all benefitted greatly from the tireless efforts of the headteacher to attract additional funding through accessing grant aid and tapping in to many sources of external support.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Around one fifth of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed concern about various aspects of the school's work. Close to one quarter of respondents are unhappy with the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and feel their suggestions and concerns are not listened to. Inspectors found no evidence to support these views. In the course of the inspection behaviour was judged to be good. Arrangements for parents and carers to make suggestions and to have their concerns listened to are also good. The school remains aware that it needs to do more to win over hearts and minds, but it is well placed to do this.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cromer High School and Language College 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 210 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 529 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	22	121	58	34	16	7	3
The school keeps my child safe	58	28	134	65	11	5	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	65	31	109	53	28	14	5	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	20	117	57	40	19	6	3
The teaching is good at this school	34	16	127	61	29	14	11	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	18	124	60	35	17	8	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	13	137	66	37	18	6	3
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)	36	17	130	63	27	13	7	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	22	108	52	37	18	7	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	19	107	52	37	18	16	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	14	111	54	44	21	11	5
The school is led and managed effectively	40	19	113	55	36	17	11	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	23	115	56	32	15	10	5

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 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. 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 pupil's 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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



10 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Cromer High School and Language College, Cromer, NR27 0EX

Thank you for your courtesy and help when we recently visited your school to conduct its inspection. We think you attend a good school that has improved significantly over the last three years. This is because your headteacher, staff and governors are working successfully to raise standards and improve attendance and behaviour. As a result those of you currently in Year 11 are on course to attain the highest standards the school has ever achieved. This is because you behave well and work hard, teaching is good and the school does all it can to provide you with the help you need to succeed. A similar picture is evident for those of you in Years 7, 8 and 9, where standards are also improving, to the point where they are above the levels expected for your age.

Your headteacher, his team and the governors are in no way complacent and are always looking for ways to make the school even better. With this in mind we have asked them to look closely at ways of building on your already good personal, social and learning skills and to make them an important feature in every lesson. We have also asked them to provide further help in promoting your basic literacy skills, by focusing on the development of speaking, listening and writing, again as part of every lesson.

It is of concern to the school that some of your parents and carers are not happy with various aspects of the your school's work. As mentioned in the report inspectors found the school to be working effectively in all respects.

I would like to sign off by wishing you all the best for your continued education and every success for those of you who are getting ready to take your place in the world of work.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead inspector

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