

# Acle High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121213
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	339900
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 June 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>	798
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Bryant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Phillips
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	South Walsham Road Acle Norwich
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 33 lessons which included the work of 32 teachers. Discussions were held with the headteacher and senior management team, members of the governing body and students. Inspectors looked at teacher's planning, information about attainment and progress, a wide range of policies and plans for future development. Inspectors scrutinised the 178 parental questionnaires received during the inspection together with 111 student questionnaires and 73 from staff.

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

- How closely the school analyses and responds to the learning needs of the different groups of students.
- Whether lower attaining girls make the progress that might reasonably be expected of them.
- How the school promotes higher standards and better progress in subjects where students have done comparatively less well.
- How effective the current focus on improving the use of assessment information is proving to be and its impact on students' learning.
- The extent to which students are aware of how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve further.

## Information about the school

The school is a little smaller than the majority of secondary schools. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to a free school meal is below average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are very low when compared with other schools. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs or a statement of special educational need is broadly similar to that found in other schools. The school has specialist status for science. The school has been accredited with Healthy Schools Status and was awarded a Higher Attaining School Award in 2008 and 2009.

**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**

**1**

### Main findings

Acle High School is a good school of which many students, parents and members of the community are justifiably proud. As one parent said, reflecting the views of many others, 'All my son's teachers have done everything they can to make sure that he can do his very best.' Many students have similarly positive views. One student commented, 'The staff have helped me a lot, I'm on course to do better than I ever thought I would in my exams.' This response is typical of that of many other students. Since the school was last inspected standards have risen and the quality of teaching has improved. This is because of the thoughtful and purposeful leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team. Together, they have introduced robust and accurate procedures to evaluate the quality of provision, identify aspects of the school's work that can be improved, and acted promptly to ensure that improvements have a positive impact on students' learning. For example, they identified that lower attaining girls were achieving relatively less well than other students. The school has responded to this successfully, to the extent that this group of students are now making better progress than some of the other groups. Similarly, a fall in standards in German and in business studies in 2009 has been reversed.

Standards are typically above average and students make good progress. Those students who have particular gifts or talents and those who have special educational needs all do well. This pattern has become firmly established over the last three years. Standards for the current Year 11 are expected to be slightly lower than in 2009, although they will still be above average and progress is still good with students in this year having lower starting points. Standards by the end of Year 9 are currently broadly in line with those expected. Progress across Years 7, 8 and 9 is satisfactory and accelerates markedly in Key Stage 4. This is because of the very precise identification of students' learning needs in Years 10 and 11 and the close attention given to their targets and how they will be achieved. Senior managers are looking closely at how these strategies, which have resulted in such marked improvement in GCSE results, can be rolled out and applied in Key Stage 3. The school's specialist science status, through its outreach work, has a positive impact on the work of partner schools. Targets for attainment in science are invariably met successfully. However, in some lessons other than science, not enough is done to promote this specialism.

Teaching and the use of assessment to support learning are good. Senior managers have introduced a range of measures to improve the use of assessment and these are proving to be successful. That said, there are still some lessons in which not enough is done to involve students in understanding how well they are doing and in helping them to know what it is they need to do to make their work even better. In a minority of

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cases, teachers' marking does not provide students with sufficient information about how to improve their work. The vast majority of lessons are typified by activities that capture students' interest and enthusiasm, resulting in good progress. Of note is the exemplary promotion, especially in English lessons, of students' speaking and listening skills. This very successful development is helping to improve the quality of students' writing and is evident in many subjects. Even so, in a minority of lessons not enough attention is given to the development of essential personal learning skills, such as developing independence or working as part of team.

The school's track record of raising standards and the rate of students' progress, especially over the last three years, points strongly towards an outstanding capacity to sustain improvements in the future. The school's assessment data also provides a clear indication that standards are likely to continue to rise over at least the next two years.

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

- Extend the strategies that have helped to raise standards in Key Stage 4 and thereby accelerate students' progress in Key Stage 3 by ensuring that all teachers:
  - make full use of the available assessment data
  - focus precisely on what each student needs to do to meet their targets.
- Fully embed the procedures designed to ensure that all students are aware of the levels they are working at and what they need to do to move up to the next level by:
  - improving the quality of teachers' marking to reflect the school's best practice
  - ensuring the involvement of students' in assessing their own progress.
- Give sufficient attention in each lesson to promoting the school's specialist science status and to the development of students' essential personal learning skills.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

In most years attainment on entry is broadly average, although the current Year 11 was below average when they joined Year 7. Assessment information reveals that over the last three years, standards have risen markedly with the percentage of students gaining five or more A\* to C passes in GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, rising to above average in 2009. In fact, the standards attained in 2009 were the highest ever for the school. While standards for the current Year 11 are expected to be slightly lower than 2009, they will still be above average. These students, like those in the previous three years, have made good progress from their various starting points. This view of good achievement is supported by the school's accurate assessment information and by the work seen during lessons and in students' books. Students in Key Stage 3 achieve satisfactorily. The school has identified pockets of under-achievement in Key Stage 3 and is introducing the strategies to Years 7, 8 and 9 that have proved to be so successful in accelerating progress in Key Stage 4. That said, throughout the school higher attaining students are challenged appropriately and students who have special

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educational needs do well.

Students' enjoyment of learning is reflected in attendance that is higher than found in most secondary schools. Their behaviour is typically good and most work hard during lessons. A small number of lessons occasionally suffer from silly or inappropriate behaviour, but such occasions are rare and managed well by staff. A very high percentage of pupils who responded to their questionnaire said they feel safe in school. Some students feel not enough is done to encourage them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. When questioned by inspectors, students revealed a good knowledge of the importance of eating healthy foods. Their commitment to exercise is evident in the high levels of participation in the good range of extra-curricular sporting activities.

Students contribute well to the school and to the wider community, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are very supportive of each other and get along well together. They are keen to take responsibility, such as becoming a prefect. Their excellent art work is displayed at various local sites of natural beauty and they participate with great enthusiasm in the very successful and highly regarded dramatic and musical productions. The school's orchestra is a much appreciated part of the community. Students give readily to support charities and some are currently taking part, alongside members of the community, in an archaeological dig that is supported by a National Lottery grant.

Students' success in national examinations and in the range of vocational courses available to them provides compelling evidence of how well the school equips them for the next stage of their education and for the world of work.

*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>	2
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>2</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>

<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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<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>2</b>  <b>1</b>
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and the curriculum meet students' learning needs well. An appropriate balance is provided between supporting students' personal development and promoting their academic and vocational progress. Every effort is made to ensure that students have access to the courses they would like to follow. The school's accommodation is being developed to give improved access to vocational provision. For example, the predominantly practical activities offered at 'The Bungalow' are proving to be increasingly popular amongst students. Students' learning is also enhanced effectively by a good range of additional activities, especially in sport and the arts. Similarly, the range of educational visits, both local and abroad, contributes to widening students' learning and their understanding of the world.

Teaching is good. Some outstanding lessons were seen during the inspection. On these occasions, the articulate and thoughtful response by students to challenging questions, their confidence in presenting their work and the quality of discussion were notable features. The majority of teachers keep students well informed about their progress and what they need to do to improve, but just occasionally not enough attention is given to promoting this important feature of students' learning. Similarly, some teachers miss opportunities to promote students' personal learning skills and neglect to include opportunities to develop the school's specialist science status during their lessons.

The good quality care the school provides is at the very heart of its work and given a high priority by all staff. Liaison with parents and carers is good and the school keeps them well informed about the progress their children are making. When problems arise they are addressed promptly. In this respect staff are particularly vigilant to the needs of any student who, because of their circumstances, may potentially face challenges or barriers to their learning and progress. Support for students who have special educational needs is good and the response to any student showing signs of falling behind in their work is prompt and effective. Students also benefit from the effective partnerships formed with agencies that provide support.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>  <b>2</b>
<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>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

Staff work together well and are very supportive of each other. They share a common goal for promoting students' personal development and ensuring that they can do as well as possible academically and vocationally. Success in this is underpinned by an effective and dedicated senior leadership team who are led exceptionally well by the headteacher who promotes a clear vision for school improvement to which everyone lends their effort. Suitably challenging targets are set, including those for the school's specialist science status. These are invariably achieved successfully. The management of teaching and learning reveals a good track record for improving the quality of provision, although not all subject leaders are fully involved in this process.

The governing body fulfils its duties well. Governors are passionate advocates for the school and its role in the local and wider community. They are also well informed about all aspects of its work. Arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe and, as far as possible protected from undue risk, are fully in place and effective. Members of the governing body, in partnership with staff, do all they can to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Similarly, community cohesion is promoted well with the school very much at the heart of its community. Educational visits and visitors help to ensure students are well informed about the wider world. The week after the inspection, a group of students are visiting Kenya to support the development of a school near Nairobi and teachers and students from China are due to visit before the end of summer term. Students are also supporting the work of a school in Malawi. These and similar visits and events play a prominent part in school life.

The school gives good value for money. Administrative and support staff work effectively to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school. The close working partnership between the governing body and the senior management team is meticulous in overseeing the wise use of resources.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>



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<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>

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are pleased with the quality of education their children receive. A minority of respondents expressed some concern about their child's progress, the guidance the school provides for them to help their children learn and the management of behaviour. In respect of each of these concerns inspectors judge the work of the school to be good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Acle 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 178 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 798 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	25	125	70	5	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	58	33	114	64	3	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	57	32	107	60	10	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	27	104	58	18	10	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	38	21	113	63	7	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	19	101	57	30	17	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	16	123	69	19	11	0	0
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)	51	29	110	62	9	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	26	101	57	15	8	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	23	93	52	21	12	7	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	14	115	65	18	10	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	36	20	114	64	10	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	26	113	63	11	6	0	0

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.**



24 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Acle High School, Acle, Norwich, NR13 3ER

You may recall we visited recently to undertake the inspection of your school. We think your school is a good one. Here are some of things that it does well.

Your teachers help you to become confident learners.

You make good progress and attain standards in tests and examinations that are higher than found in the majority of schools.

Your behaviour is good. You work hard in lessons and tell us that you feel safe in school.

The school provides you with a curriculum that meets your personal, academic and vocational needs well.

Your school benefits from having a good governing body and a strong headteacher and senior leadership team who work effectively to bring about improvements.

In order to maintain the pace of improvement we are asking your headteacher and the staff to do the following.

Extend the strategies that have led to higher standards in GCSE examinations to enable you to make better progress in Key Stage 3.

Make sure that you are all aware of the levels you are working at and know how to improve your work. To help with this we are asking teachers to make their marking more helpful and to involve you even more in assessing your own progress.

Ensure teachers across the school give more attention in each lesson to promoting the school's science specialism and to the development of essential personal learning skills.

I would also like to wish you all the very best for your future in education and the world of work.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead Inspector

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