

Sewell Park College

St Clement's Hill, Norwich, NR3 4BX

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students in the main school and in the sixth form are not making enough progress to secure good achievement.
- Boys make less progress than girls and progress in English and mathematics is slower than it should be for some students.
- Not all lessons consistently provide activities at the appropriate level of difficulty for different groups of students in the class.
- In some lessons, teachers allow students to be passive when they are asking the class questions or provide the answer too quickly without challenging students to think things through for themselves.
- The sixth form requires improvement. In the sixth form, not enough students make good progress because the targets they are set are not aspirational enough.
- Although leaders in the school, including governors, are securing improvements to teaching, greater focus needs to be given to the progress students make to increase the rate of improvement in some aspects of the schools work to become good.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is successfully conveying his vision for the school to all members of the school community. Staff and students speak highly of the difference he has made since he joined the school, particularly to students' behaviour.
- Behaviour has improved since the last inspection. The atmosphere in the school is positive and students are respectful to each other and to staff and visitors. They feel safe in school and some make a strong contribution to life in the community.
- Some aspects of teaching have improved, such as the way teachers mark students' work and provide them with advice on how to improve. Students' appreciate the increased range of opportunities in lessons to pursue practical work, or, as one student said: 'be allowed to get on with it'.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students being taught in a range of contexts. 31 lessons were observed, three with senior leaders. Two series of shorter visits to a number of lessons were undertaken with senior leaders to look at the quality of marking and behaviour in lessons. Other learning activities observed included visits to sessions being provided to support students with particular needs or who had been removed from their class for poor behaviour.
- Meetings were held with staff, students, parents, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documents, including the school's own records of pupils' progress and attainment, monitoring documents, records relating to the performance management of staff and those relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Elaine Taylor, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Owen	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector
Shan Oswald	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils receiving pupil premium, which is additional funding given for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is higher than the national average.
- A larger proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported through school action than found nationally, as is the proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average but the proportion who speak English as an additional language is similar to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school uses a small amount of additional provision at Norfolk Training Services and at Easton College, both of which are in Norwich.
- Since September 2012, the school has offered sixth form provision separately from the consortium to which it formerly belonged.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, including that in the sixth form, so that more teaching is good or outstanding by:
 - improving teachers questioning skills so that all students are encouraged to join in and to think through the answers for themselves to deepen their understanding
 - ensuring more teachers provide activities in lessons with the right level of difficulty for all students and adjust the activities as the lesson proceeds if they find students need more time or are ready to move on more quickly.
- Raise attainment further and speed up progress particularly for boys and for all students in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior and middle leaders work more closely together in partnership to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work
 - checks on the school's strengths and weaknesses take full account of the impact of the school's actions on students' achievement.
- Improve progress in the sixth form by:
 - providing suitable courses for a range of levels of ability
 - increasing attendance and improving students' ability to work without the teacher's help.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards are rising but remain below average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics, is below average but has risen since the time of the last inspection.
- Not enough students make the expected progress in English and particularly in mathematics for their achievement to be good. Students are making better progress in both these subjects this year. The improvement is stronger in English because changes to the curriculum for mathematics are relatively new.
- Changes to the curriculum which provide more suitable opportunities for all students have led to a greater increase in the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes. This is now above the national average.
- The school makes very little use of early entry into examinations and therefore the practice does not have a negative impact on achievement for any group.
- Students arrive in the school with standards that are well below average and the majority make average progress overall. However, a small group of students with complex needs have made much less progress than expected in the past. Changes to the provision for these students are having a positive impact on their achievement this year.
- Boys make much less progress than girls. Students for whom English is an additional language make better progress because they are well supported and are well-integrated into the school community.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make progress that is in line with that of similar groups of students nationally. This is because they are supported effectively in class and through special programmes to suit their individual needs. Those students with low reading ages are improving their reading well through a special literacy reading programme.
- The average point score attained by students eligible for the pupil premium shows that the gap between their attainment and that of other students in the school is smaller than that found nationally. The impact of the use of the funding for these students is particularly noticeable in Year 7, where all the students met their target in English and over three quarters in mathematics.
- The evaluation of the achievement of students in the sixth form requires caution as the provision is in the process of reorganisation. Comparisons over time are therefore unreliable. Some students have low attainment in science subjects because they have been placed on courses without a high enough grade at GCSE. This is being tackled with better guidance and stricter entry requirements. The school is setting more demanding targets for students so their progress over time moves to good.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good across different subjects. Although good and outstanding practice exists, a higher proportion is needed to move progress to good, especially in mathematics. New leadership in mathematics is starting to have a positive impact on teaching in that subject.
- Not all teachers plan activities that will be demanding enough for the most able, or provide sufficient support for those who might struggle.
- In a growing proportion of lessons, students are encouraged to be independent and teachers plan activities to keep them engaged right from the start. One student spoke of his lessons in art, where there is even an activity for them to do if they are waiting to enter the room.
- Teachers have a wealth of information on students' needs and the progress they are making. Many use it well to check that they will meet their targets. However, sometimes the target is not

adjusted if a student meets it earlier than anticipated. Not all teachers check effectively in a lesson to judge when a student is ready to move forward to more demanding work or to the next step.

- During question and answer sessions, some teachers expertly match their questions to students' level of ability. For more able students, they challenge them to think deeply and work out answers for themselves. For the less able, they ensure there are questions they can answer and ensure all participate. Teachers use the information from these sessions to adjust the lesson.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not deal firmly enough with students who are not paying sufficient attention and this slows, but does not stop learning.
- Topics chosen in many lessons contribute well to students' spiritual and moral development. For example, students consider the plight of the homeless in English; different cultures are explored in modern language lessons; drama lessons allow students to explore different thoughts and beliefs.
- Literacy is supported by teachers' good use of technical language because they have good subject knowledge. They check that students understand this vocabulary and provide opportunities for students to read aloud which builds their confidence.
- A new approach to improving the way teachers provide students with written comments on their work has had some notable successes. The quality of marking is checked regularly and thoroughly and effective action taken where improvement is needed. This aspect of teaching is more consistently good as a result.
- A new approach to homework is being developed with tasks that run alongside and complement class teaching. The impact is not yet clearly evident and this is the most criticised aspect of the school's work from the parents who completed the online survey.
- Teaching in the sixth form has the same strengths and weaknesses as in the main school. Independence is not well supported in some lessons, especially for those students who went through the main school when this was a weaker feature of teaching. Support for different groups of students is now being developed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is orderly and safe. Students and parents say the school is a safe place. Students who have been in the school for a long period say that behaviour and safety have improved. All members of the school community agree that the school's system for managing behaviour is working.
- Students say that they know who to go to if they are worried about anything and know that the support is readily available. The school is also aware of which students are most vulnerable and puts extra support in place.
- Bullying is rare and students say that if it does happen, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. This applies to all kinds of bullying, including homophobic and that related to sex, religion, race or disability. Students understand the different forms bullying can take.
- Students mix well together across age and ethnic groups. Their good social development is also seen in the way they contribute to the school and wider community, especially with events that use their enterprise skills.
- Students' attitudes to learning are generally positive and most want to do well and work hard to reach their targets. Some students provide good support for others as mentors or through paired reading schemes.
- The school's exclusion rates have improved because systems to support students provide opportunities for staff to work collaboratively, intervening quickly if issues arise.
- Attendance is broadly average and punctuality has improved since the previous inspection. The school works strenuously to reduce absence. The attendance of students for whom English is an additional language and for those in Year 7 have shown the biggest improvements.
- Attendance in the sixth form is low. Students are not always using study sessions well, they disengage and progress slows. Those who support younger students are making a good

contribution to the school as a whole.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have identified correctly the strengths and areas for improvement in the school, but some of their judgements are OVER generous. They do not give enough consideration to the impact of actions taken. As a result, achievement still requires improvement.
- Having identified what needs to improve, the school has developed plans to meet these aims, which are fit for purpose.
- The senior leadership team have developed systems to gather data on the progress students are making, their attendance and behaviour. Information on individual students gives rise to effective intervention, especially in English and mathematics and leads to extra support. As a result, progress in these subjects is improving, but remains less than expected for too many students.
- Subject leaders are increasingly checking the quality of the teaching in their areas of responsibility and are held to account for achievement in their subjects. They meet regularly together to share ideas and good practice and meet separately with the headteacher to discuss students' progress. Missed opportunities to combine these systems have limited the rate of improvement.
- Systems for reviewing teachers' performance are clear and well-organised. Teachers are only rewarded after a rigorous appraisal of their work.
- Pupil premium money is spent wisely. It has resulted in improvements in results in GCSE examinations and the gap between the standards for these students and others is smaller than that found nationally.
- The curriculum is being developed well. A programme to develop literacy and numeracy in Year 7 has been extended to Year 8 because of its success. In Year 11, additional programmes are provided as part of the range of options to support students to gain a grade C or above in GCSE. Other education provided outside the school is being reduced and more is being provided by the school itself. The students who are being supported elsewhere for some of the week attend well and the provision is well-monitored.
- The leadership of the sixth form requires improvement. The leader of the sixth form is aware of the issues for improvement and plans are in place to deal with them, but routines are still in the process of being developed. Some good provision to support progression into further or higher education or employment is having a positive impact on the number of students who leave school with no further route planned. The curriculum is being developed to provide more appropriate courses for some students, including a foundation year for those who want to go on to A level courses but have not done well enough in their GCSEs.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- Most parents who responded to the questionnaire say the school is well led and managed. Staff and students are very positive about the impact the headteacher has had.
- The local authority is providing appropriate support for the school. They recently supported the process for appointing the headteacher. They have formed a positive professional relationship with school leaders and are providing practical support in a number of ways. The headteacher has formed links with schools outside the authority which have been positive, but the local authority identified potential links with local schools should they be needed. Good support was provided to improve the use of data. Support to develop weaker teachers has been effective. Training has been provided for governors. The local authority carried out a review of the school just before the inspection and further work is planned.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance requires improvement because governors do not have a clear enough understanding of how to challenge assertions about school performance so they can improve the accuracy of some of the judgements made by leaders.
- Governors understand their role in challenging and supporting the school. They meet with senior leaders regularly and attend activities in school such as open evenings. They observe aspects of the day-to-day work of the school.
- They have supported the headteacher well with issues arising from more rigorous management of teachers' performance and understand the link between performance and pay. They have shared in developing the vision for the school.
- The governors bring a useful mix of skills and expertise to their work. They fulfil their duties and have a clear understanding of where their own strengths and areas for development lie.
- Training has been provided in aspects of their work by the local authority so they are well-informed of new developments such as Ofsted's Data Dashboard.
- They can give examples of where their work has been effective. For example, they have taken an active part in ensuring the move to an independent sixth form has been smooth.
- The pupil premium information on the website is well understood and governors want to improve the quality of the information contained so it more clearly shows impact.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121176
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	402012

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	970
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Keith Crocker
Headteacher	Gavin Bellamy
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2010
Telephone number	01603 411721
Fax number	1603487575
Email address	office@sewellpark.com

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