

# Sewell Park College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121176
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	339888
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Seath HMI

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	989
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	96
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Reverend Keith Crocker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Karen Topping
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	St Clement's Hill Norwich Norfolk
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Forty lessons were observed and 31 teachers seen. Inspectors met groups of students and held meetings with various members of staff, the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including records of lesson observations and governors meeting minutes. Examples of students' work were scrutinised closely. By the end of the inspection 115 completed parental questionnaires had been received.

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

- Standards attained by different groups of students, especially those who find learning difficult.
- The behaviour of students.
- The extent to which improvements seen in 2009 are due to sustainable underlying changes in provision.
- The school's self evaluation, target setting and improvement processes.
- How effectively the school prepares students for transition to the sixth form.

## Information about the school

The school is of average size and shares its sixth form with two others in the area to form the Kett sixth form partnership. It has specialist status for business and enterprise. Since the last inspection the school has been consolidated into a single site, avoiding the necessity for students to cross a main road when moving between lessons. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is less than expected nationally, but is increasing. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very high - almost half of the students. Levels of deprivation in the school's catchment area are relatively high and the aspirations of many students are low. A significant number of students join the school at times of the year other than the normal start dates.

**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?**

**3**

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

**2**

### Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that is improving strongly. Standards of attainment remain well below national averages but they are improving quickly. Progress in class is mostly satisfactory, with evidence that it is accelerating as students progress through the school. Some students demonstrate good progress, particularly amongst the large group that find learning difficult. Despite declining prior attainment at intake, encouraging indications are that improvements are sustainable and will result in higher attainment this academic year. Older students are particularly confident that they have witnessed an improvement in ethos and learning facilities within the school since the last inspection.

The school's self-assessments are realistic and accurate with crisp areas for improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning is exemplary and is increasingly leading to the sharing of best practice and the further development of staff. Leadership and management, particularly in middle leaders, are becoming stronger as improvements emerge. A clear direction for improvement is quickly becoming established since the move to one site and this has been helped by extensive national challenge support. Attendance has improved markedly and is satisfactory. This is the result of commendable wider partnerships and consistent monitoring by the school. Achievements are improving because the quality of provision has got better since the last inspection. Care guidance and support, together with the curriculum, are now good so that more students can achieve more and are supported to do better, especially the least able. Teaching remains satisfactory though with signs of improvement that are becoming embedded well. These are most notable in the monitoring of progress and the understanding of students about what they should do to improve. However, this information is not always used well in class.

Leadership and management are improving, especially at middle leader level. However, improvement is being held back by weak or inconsistent management of poor behaviour that a small minority of disruptive students display. The school recognises the need to revamp behaviour policies so that the limits of what is acceptable and the consequences of unacceptable behaviour are well understood, fair, and implemented consistently by all. Students that are internally excluded, often by placing them into sixth form classes, are not always given productive work to do. Rising standards and accelerating achievement as a result of better provision and improved leadership and management indicates that the school is well placed to improve further.

The school provides satisfactory preparation for the sixth form. Students generally enter post-16 provision with low levels of attainment and insufficiently well developed study

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skills. They receive good advice and guidance on entry and benefit from the inclusive nature of the centre and the wide curriculum it offers. They quickly develop a maturity and confidence that will serve them well in later life.

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

- Within 24 months, raise attainment to at least the national average by:
  - ensuring that the best teaching and learning practice is disseminated widely
  - making sure that all classes enable students of all abilities to make good progress
  - ensuring that poor behaviour is consistently and effectively managed by all staff
  - ensure that governors effectively and regularly monitor the effectiveness of behaviour policies.
- Within 12 months ensure that all internally excluded students have full access to appropriate programmes of work during exclusion sessions.
- Within 6 months review current behaviour policies and implement new ones by:
  - ensuring that parents and carers, students and staff and local authority are fully involved in the process.
  - renewed emphasis to ensure that students are aware of their responsibilities to others.
  - devising targets for the behaviour of groups, classes and if necessary individuals, so that they can be effectively monitored.
- 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**

When students enter the school in Year 7 their prior attainment is well below average with a declining trend. The proportion of the highest attaining pupils is well below that expected. Historical data indicate that students have made much less progress than expected resulting in standards that are well below national averages when they leave. However, the school has demonstrated rapid and sustainable improvement in outcomes since 2007/08 because the quality of provision and the monitoring of students' progress has improved. Many students now make progress that is close to that expected, and for some it is better. For example, many who find learning difficult demonstrate better progress because of the good support they receive. In 2008/09, the proportion who attained 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics increased by 12% over the previous year, well above that seen at the last inspection although still below national averages. This improvement was mirrored in core subjects. Girls' attainment is better than boys, but this difference in GCSE pass rates is negligible when English and mathematics are included. Despite the improving trend however, pass

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rates remain well below national averages and the proportion attaining the highest grades A\* and A is low. Notably, improvements in 2009 have been achieved against a background of declining prior attainment on intake. Early GCSE results indicate further improvements in 2010, and this is confirmed by the school's own tracking data that has been accurate in previous years.

Extensive observations in class confirmed that the majority of students are now making the progress expected of them, and a few are exceeding this. Within individual classes the variability of progress is wide however, and the school recognises that this is a priority area for attention. Students enjoy lessons that are interesting, and they are not slow to contribute. However, in a small minority of classes learning is disrupted because a minority of students become bored and restless and when this happens it affects the learning of others.

Inspectors paid particular attention to behaviour around the school and in class. A small minority of parents and carers and a minority of students expressed concerns about the effectiveness with which poor behaviour is managed, as did a minority of staff.

Inspectors did not see persistent disruption or poor behaviour in corridors or around the school although occasional boisterous episodes occur. The school is now a safe, single site with use of the former second site only for sports facilities. A 'Safer schools' link has been promoted with local police along with daily patrols and further educational links on personal safety, because there is an adjacent public park. Students are clear about their enjoyment of the transformed school and behaviour is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and are developing well at middle manager level. The school has a good focus on improvement, but recognises the need to overhaul behaviour policies and to ensure that they are applied evenly and fairly by all staff. Students are keen to be involved in this process as are some parents and carers.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</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 adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<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>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Most teaching is satisfactory with a significant proportion that is good or better. A very small minority of lessons are inadequate. Inspectors agreed with the school's evaluations that teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory with areas that have improved since the last inspection. The emphasis on assessment has improved markedly. Teachers now have good and accurate evaluations of how well students are doing, and these are understood by the students themselves. Much professional development has been undertaken to improve aspects of classroom practice and the extent to which this is improving, especially in English and mathematics, is significant. The most successful lessons are well planned and enable all students to make progress because teachers have a firm grasp of the progress being made by all. In these lessons they understand the needs of the less and most able and cater for them successfully. In the less successful teaching this progress information is not well understood so that all students are required to complete the same work or task. This means that some are bored whilst others find the work difficult. As a consequence, boredom or frustration sets in and behaviour deteriorates so learning declines. In a few classes this behaviour is not well managed or contained. Generally, students do not develop the skills of independent learning well and this puts them at a disadvantage when they undertake sixth form studies.

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff have a good understanding of the range of circumstances and needs of the students. About one third of students require some degree of support with their learning difficulties, special needs or behaviour. Transitions between stages of schooling are well managed. Links with local primary schools are well supported and the induction programme in Year 7 allows students to develop confident social and learning skills. Work-related learning and careers guidance are well managed. More vulnerable students are supported through good communication and links with outside agencies and professionals. Alternative timetables for individual Key Stage 3 students are available where needed. Effective learning pathways are provided for students who find learning difficult and those learning English as an additional language. The establishment of a school council with an active student voice means that students feel positive about their ability to contribute to school improvement.

The school's curriculum is good because it provides a broad and balanced range of opportunities that make a good contribution to students' achievement and well-being. It

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meets statutory requirements and caters for the needs of most groups of students well. The new 'Reach' integrated curriculum in Year 7 has helped students to improve their literacy skills and the skill of working independently on well-chosen themes that combine several subjects. In Years 10 and 11 the good range of options enables most students to choose pathways that suit them, whether GCSE or vocational, including the new Diploma. The effective curriculum has helped halve the small proportion of students leaving school without any qualifications over three years. Opportunities to progress to the sixth form are well organised, and the school's status as a business and enterprise college is well reflected as all students take a business related examination course in Years 10 and 11. Most take part in enterprise activities with local primary schools and partner business organisations. Many students take a regular part in sports, music and drama activities during lunchtimes and after school. The school's enterprise programme allows many students to develop teamwork and problem-solving skills effectively.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<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>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leadership and management are satisfactory, though with aspects that are better than this. The school has been extensively supported through the national challenge programme, and this has been successful in developing leadership qualities in middle managers and in key subject areas. The headteacher and her team give the school a clear direction for improvement. Effective senior leadership, supported by well-focused governance, has been responsible for bringing about the improvements seen including rising GCSE results.

The school has a good understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. Self-assessments, particularly at faculty level are clear and succinct. For the most part, targets set are both achievable and challenging. Performance management has improved and staff are increasingly held accountable for the performance of their students and classes. The management of assessment, monitoring of progress, and the evaluation and development of teaching and learning are all strong. The lesson observation system is accurate and places a good emphasis on learning.

However, the school recognises that it needs to improve the management of poor behaviour - a concern of parents and carers and staff. It is inconsistent and not well implemented across the school. In addition, the significant numbers of students who are temporarily excluded from class within the school are not always given suitable work or



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activities to engage them. The practice of placing disruptive lower school students in sixth form lessons, especially when they have nothing to do, is not productive.

Good governance has ensured the smooth transition from two separate sites to a single campus, and the change associated with this has been well managed. Governors bring a range of skills to their role, and have effectively challenged poor performance. They have ensured that the school complies with statutory requirements around safeguarding and race relations. They recognise that there is a need to undergo training in the evaluation of school performance data so that they are able to challenge the headteacher more effectively.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. Inspectors talked with many of the increasing number of students of minority ethnic heritage. They presented a picture of little or no racism and of a school that takes good measures to ensure that all are treated equally. Racist incidents are monitored and dealt with well. The school takes pains to ensure good communications with parents and carers whose first language is not English, for example by translating the Ofsted questionnaire into over a dozen other languages.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

The sixth form is satisfactory. The progress made by students has been satisfactory since the last inspection but is improving quickly because the quality of provision has significantly improved. The good provision has not yet had time to impact on the standards that students attain. The teaching and learning observed during the

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inspection was good and students made good gains in their learning. The curriculum offered is broad and is well matched to the abilities and needs of students, with opportunities to retake GCSEs if needed. Care, guidance and support are good. Students quickly develop the disciplines of independent study, aided by the trusting relationships that they have with tutors. They are mature and thoughtful young people although these assets are insufficiently utilised in the rest of the school, for example by acting as role models or reading mentors. The support they receive is good. The management of the sixth form is satisfactory.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

Inspectors agreed with the majority views of parents and carers, but recognised those concerns where responses were least strong. The very large majority felt their children enjoyed school and were safe. A similar proportion stated that they were happy with their children's experiences. The highest negative response rate was around the extent to which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Though this was a small minority of parents and carers, inspectors agreed that it was an important matter that required further improvement.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sewell Park 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 115 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 989 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	21	75	65	11	10	4	3
The school keeps my child safe	27	23	77	67	9	8	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	26	71	62	11	10	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	27	71	62	8	7	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	15	13	77	67	13	11	4	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	12	73	63	21	18	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	9	79	69	20	17	4	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)	22	19	83	72	6	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	17	84	73	8	7	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	10	66	57	28	24	7	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	6	68	59	21	18	10	9
The school is led and managed effectively	17	15	65	57	21	18	6	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	17	80	70	8	7	7	6

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.**



Friday 18 June 2010

Dear Students,

Inspection of Sewell Park College, Norfolk, NR3 4BX

First, I would like to thank you all for your contributions to the inspection of your school which took place earlier this week. Almost all of you were courteous, polite, and helpful - thank you. We visited many of your classes and spoke with several of you. We also looked at the work you do, and many other aspects of school life.

Your school is improving. Many of the changes are recent and have not yet had sufficient time to impact, but they are there. Standards are improving quickly, and much of this is down to you. For example, you have managed to improve attendance in the last couple of years to close to the national average - well done. Other reasons for improvement are the opportunities that you have within the school and the care, guidance and support that you receive.

Most of you were complementary about your time at the school, but some had a concern that was shared by a small minority parents and carers. You and your parents and carers do not like it when the unacceptable behaviour of a small minority disrupts the learning of others, and feel that this is not managed well by the school. That message came across loud and clear from questionnaires, and from talking with you. We have asked the school to make a number of changes to put this right. They will be looking again at how poor behaviour is managed, and I have asked them to involve you and your parents and carers in this process so that you can all take responsibility for it. This will only be successful if you help in the process. Remember that it is your education, your school, and it is in your interests to get the best out of the opportunities you have.

We have also asked that the school ensures that you all reach higher standards in your GCSEs, and we have made some suggestions about how this can be done. The school will be making sure you are well taught because teachers will be sharing the good practice more. Also governors will keep a closer eye on how well you are doing. One of the points you and your parents and carers raised was that when students are internally excluded for disruptive behaviour they are not always given appropriate work to do. The school agrees that this is the case and that improvement is required.

Thank you once again, and I wish you well

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath

Her Majesty's Inspector

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