

King Edward VII School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121187
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327426
Inspection dates	25–26 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Ian Seath HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1396
Sixth form	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Ring
Headteacher	Mr Michael Douglass
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 March 2006
School address	Gaywood Road King's Lynn PE30 2QB
Telephone number	01553 773606
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average with a substantial sixth form. It is popular within the community that it serves and is oversubscribed. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around that expected. Prior attainment on entry is below the national average. The school has sports college status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

King Edward VII is a good and improving school with some outstanding features. As a consequence, students' progress has improved across most aspects. Against a background of declining prior attainment on entry, standards have remained close to national averages, although with encouraging signs of improvement. The school's successful sixth form serves its students well. Overall, the school is held in high regard by the community it serves. The large majority of parental questionnaires received expressed their support of the school.

Teaching and learning have improved from satisfactory to good since the previous inspection because of the extensive professional development and sharing of good practice that the school has undertaken. In many classes students demonstrate very good learning. This is helped by the very effective monitoring and tracking system which the school has developed. Students have a very good knowledge of their progress, and the reports that they receive are exemplary. However, this information is not always used in class to ensure that teaching caters for the needs of all.

Outstanding care, guidance and support, together with a good curriculum, ensure that students demonstrate good personal development and well-being. Those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they receive excellent support. The school's newly developed assertive mentoring scheme is proving effective in improving the attainment of those students in danger of underachieving.

Leadership and management are good because they ensure that students make good progress. Issues identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The effectiveness of middle managers has improved, as has sharing of good practice. The school has an accurate view of its own weaknesses and strengths, and recognises what needs to be done to improve further. The school has demonstrated good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the sixth form is good. The number of students staying on past GCSEs is increasing, and around a third join from other schools. Students make good progress although this is variable between subjects. For some it is excellent, for example, in English literature, religious education and physical education (PE). In common with national trends, pass rates are consistently high. The overall proportion of students attaining the highest grades is around the national average. The sixth form meets the needs of students well and offers a wide range of A- and AS-level subjects. Students wishing to pursue vocational options are able to take advantage of the curriculum offered in the nearby further education college with which the school works closely. Students demonstrate good, and occasionally outstanding, study skills. They are accomplished learners who take their studies very seriously and contribute very well to school life. The large majority progress to university, most to their first choice institution. Pastoral arrangements are outstanding and are highly valued by students. Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good, and

students receive very good advice and guidance. The majority of parents are supportive of the sixth form.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching consistently challenges all students to learn to the best of their ability.
- Improve further the progress students make so that standards rise at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. When students enter the school in Year 7 their prior attainment is below that expected for their age. As they move through the school they make good progress which brings their attainment at Key Stage 4 up to around the national averages, and above in some aspects. Although it declined a little in mathematics in 2008, overall progress improved markedly and is now significantly above that seen at the time of the last inspection. Boys and girls make equally good progress. Lower ability students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make very good progress. Progress seen in Years 10 and 11 has accelerated in the last two years.

Overall attainment seen at Key Stage 4 improved markedly in 2008, and it is now significantly above the national average. However, this masks some underlying differences. For example, results in English have not improved, and in mathematics have declined slightly. In 2008, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C rose to the national average. When English and mathematics are included however it declined to just below average, having been above for a number of years. The proportion of students achieving five or more passes at grades A* to G rose to well above the national average, confirming the very good progress seen for the least able. Indications from the school's tracking data are of improved GCSE grades for this year, including for mathematics.

A higher proportion of girls than boys attain five or more high grade GCSE passes, although this difference is smaller when English and mathematics are included, with an improving trend. Differences between pass rates in individual subjects are marked. For example, in drama and music pass rates are well below the national averages. By contrast, those for English literature and religious studies were well above average in 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's sports college status contributes positively to the good personal development and well-being of students. The extensive range of activities, responsibility and the development of rewards systems have contributed to their enjoyment. Positive experiences in and out of the classroom are leading to good development of students' self esteem. This in turn leads to behaviour in and out of lessons that is good and attendance that is satisfactory and improving. Students are courteous and welcoming to visitors and treat each other with respect.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is developed well through lessons, assemblies, numerous events and exceptional charity work. The students' spirit of generosity has resulted in them regularly raising around £12,000 for a variety of good causes every year. The school has secured an International School Award which reflects the good work it has undertaken in recent years with their partner school in China. This work, alongside a wide range of other curriculum experiences, has developed student awareness of other cultures and an appreciation of their own local community.

Students understand the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles and the school helps them to do so through providing a healthy menu and plentiful opportunities for taking part in physical activities, including numerous after school sports. Student involvement in making a positive contribution to the school and the wider community is good. Students contribute well to the management of the school through effectively taking on responsibilities ranging from being listeners to running the valued school council. Good academic achievement, a well developed sense of personal responsibility for their learning, very focused work experience and appropriate careers advice ensures that students are very well equipped for further studies or the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges that it has sustained good quality teaching and learning. A rigorous system is in place to monitor standards of teaching and learning. Staff are given individual feedback and are expected to meet targets set to improve the quality of their teaching. The effectiveness of teaching is borne out by the good and improving progress made by students. The most successful lessons challenge and inspire students. They have clear learning objectives, are well paced and have varied and interesting activities to which students respond with enthusiasm. This was clearly exemplified in a Year 13 religious education lesson where students demonstrated exceptional levels of oracy when debating the concepts of evil and free will.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not challenge students sufficiently and expectations of what they might achieve are too low. Teachers' use of information and communication technology (ICT) and assessment has improved since the previous inspection. However, the quality of marking is variable and students are not always made aware of how they can improve their work. There are exemplary systems in place for tracking and monitoring students' work, although some teachers do not make the best use of the information available from assessment to meet learners' individual needs in class. When teaching assistants are present they make an effective contribution to learning.

In many classes, students demonstrate very good learning. Often, they ask challenging questions of the teacher and each other. They stimulate class discussions well, and in some classes peer evaluation is used exceptionally well. For example in

PE, students are asked to identify the good work seen in each other's technique so that the whole group learn better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good and provides students with the broad range of opportunities they need to prepare them for adult life. Sports college status has enabled a number of accelerated routes through the curriculum, for example, the Year 10 GCSE PE group and the Year 9 GCSE short course in PE. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. During Key Stage 3, good strategies are in place to help students improve their literacy and numeracy skills. A recently appointed Eastern European Liaison Worker has been instrumental in helping more families engage with the school. ICT skills are taught to all students in specialist lessons and there is fast developing, effective use of the subject in the wider curriculum.

In Years 10 and 11, students have the choice of four curriculum routes extending to five pathways in September 2009. There is extensive provision of vocational courses alongside more academic GCSE courses and students mix and match according to their ambitions and interests. There are suitable plans in place to further extend vocational provision to meet all students' needs in close collaboration with a local college in the next academic year. There is also good alternative provision for a small group of students at risk of disaffection which involves longer work placements.

With the support of the school's personal, social and health education and citizenship programmes, students know how to keep themselves safe and how to live a healthy lifestyle. Enrichment and extra-curricular activities are outstanding with many educational visits that support the learning. There is a very extensive range of after-school activities with high numbers of students participating. For example, there are a high number of competitive and successful sports teams, and drama and musical events. All these activities add greatly to students' interest and enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides very high quality care, guidance and support for all its students. Day-to-day health and safety procedures are effective, as are those relating to child protection and the care of looked after children. Comprehensive and exceptionally well planned induction procedures are tailored to meet students' individual needs and include, for example, a summer school for all incoming Year 7 students. Such opportunities enable these young students to get to know each other before the commencement of the school year and this familiarity puts them in a positive frame of mind for learning from the very start. Staff know individual students very well and are committed to ensuring that everyone achieves their best, both in terms of their academic progress and personal development. The school's assertive mentoring is showing promising signs of improving attainment in those students at risk of underachieving. Support for students with particular learning needs, including those with English as an additional language and those facing challenging circumstances, is exemplary. Early identification and close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures the needs of these students are fully met. Highly effective use of assessment information for setting targets and tracking progress makes a significant contribution

to the high standard of educational guidance provided. Students receive comprehensive information about the options available in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and drop out rates are very low. Students also receive very specific feedback on how to improve in each and every subject and this detailed guidance is underpinning on-going improvements to the overall standard of students' work and their achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because they have enabled marked improvements in progress so that it is now above the national average in most respects. All of the issues identified at the last inspection have been tackled and, as a result, many aspects of the school have improved. The headteacher has given the school clear direction, and is well supported by his colleagues and the governors. Parents are mostly supportive of the school, although a very small number commented that they felt communications between the school and home could be improved.

Teaching and learning have improved because the school has put much effort into identifying and sharing good practice, and into professional development. This has been aided by a monitoring system which allows teachers and students to be very clear about what progress they are making against targets, and what students need to do to improve. The school's self-evaluations are exemplary. They accurately reflect the school's strengths and weaknesses and are closely matched to school development and action plans. Although there is some uneven practice between departments, actions to improve provision are precise and well monitored. The school's lesson observation system is largely accurate and has proved to be a good vehicle to drive improvements in teaching. The school demonstrates good capacity to improve.

The effectiveness of middle leaders has improved since the last inspection. They receive good guidance and support from senior managers and have undertaken much development. Operational aspects of the curriculum are now monitored effectively by leaders, for example, by undertaking learning walks to audit the quality of marking. However, this has yet to impact consistently across the school and the quality of both marking and homework are uneven. Some parents are concerned about this.

The school complies with requirements for child protection and race relations, both of which are regularly reviewed by governors. Equality of opportunity is promoted well, and community cohesion is good. Students have benefited from the school's outstanding partnership working, for example, through curriculum developed in conjunction with the local college and other local schools.

Governors exercise their role effectively. They bring a good range of skills to their role, and have been instrumental in supporting and challenging the school to undertake many of the improvements seen since the last inspection. Based on improving achievements and standards, the school has demonstrated good value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16–19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B



27 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of King Edward VII School, King's Lynn, PE30 2QB

As you will know, I recently visited your school with four other inspectors. We met with many of you, sat in on classes, and talked with some of your teachers. Throughout this you were well behaved and courteous, and for this we thank you. Your school has many strengths and one of them is you.

You told us many things about your school, for example that most of you enjoy your time there, and that you are well cared for and safe. Your parents were also mostly supportive, although a few raised concerns about communications with school.

Your school is a good one, and it is improving. We think that if you work hard you will get a good set of GCSEs or A levels and will be successful when you leave. Many aspects of the school have improved since the last inspection, for example the teaching and the care and advice given to you. We were also very impressed by the willingness many of you have to learning.

We have asked the school to work on raising standards further by improving teaching so that it caters for the needs of all of you. In fact, the school agrees with us about this and has already made a good start. You can help in this process by ensuring that you understand what to do to improve and by asking questions when you are unsure. Your attendance has improved recently – well done!

You also told us that the amount of bullying is low. You can help keep it that way by talking to an adult if you are affected.

Once again thank you, and I wish you all well.

Yours faithfully

Ian Seath
Her Majesty's Inspector