

# Smithdon High School

Downs Road, Hunstanton, PE36 5HY

**Inspection dates** 12–13 June 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Teaching has improved as a result of strong systems to evaluate its quality, which are followed up by well-focused support and training.
- Relationships between staff and students are a strength of the school and have a positive impact on students' learning and behaviour.
- The sixth form is good. Current progress made by students is good and improving due to good teaching.
- Students eligible for additional funding (pupil premium) make good progress.
- Governors have set priorities for improvement. They hold school leaders to account to ensure the school continues to improve.
- Careful tracking and checking of pupils' performance are used to plan appropriate support and provide extra help where it is needed.
- Students show high levels of respect and tolerance for other cultures and religions and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well.
- School leaders and governors have succeeded in improving teaching and raising standards in English and mathematics. They are highly ambitious for the school's further improvement and have high expectations of staff and students.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally teaching does not challenge students fully. As a result, a small number do not make as much progress as they could.
- Marking and written feedback are not consistently helpful in guiding students on how to improve their work.
- Improvements in progress and attainment in some subjects have not been as fast as those in English and mathematics.
- Very occasionally, there is low-level disruption in lessons when teaching does not fully engage students' interest.
- A few teachers do not assess students' work during lessons well enough to be able to tell students how they are doing, and what they need to do to improve their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons, including visits to lessons to assess the quality of learning for students during a citizenship day themed session and Year 11 revision classes. Three lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body, three groups of students and a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and analysed its information about students’ progress and attainment.
- Inspectors looked at the work in students’ books.
- Inspectors examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and exclusions, and looked at documents used by leaders and governors to check and evaluate the school’s work and to keep students safe.

## Inspection team

Jalil Shaikh, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector
Stephen Daniels	Additional Inspector
Claire Austin-Macrae	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Smithdon High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are considerably lower than found in other schools nationally.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy receives additional funding (pupil premium) is broadly average. The students receiving support from this additional funding are in care or are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school provides education or training for a few students off-site, through two local organisations in King's Lynn. The College of West Anglia delivers Level 1 courses to Year 11 students and the Rosebery Centre supports the development of students with special educational needs.
- The sixth form does not operate in a consortium with any other school or college.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school receives funding for some Year 7 students to catch up on literacy and numeracy skills.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding in order to accelerate students' progress and raise attainment by:
  - making sharper checks of students' learning during lessons so that teachers can guide more students to make rapid progress
  - improving marking and the quality of written feedback so that students are helped to understand how to improve their work, making sure they act upon the guidance they are given
  - ensuring tasks and activities in science are sufficiently challenging to move students' learning forward quickly so that more of them achieve GCSE A\* and A grades
  - ensuring students are fully engaged so that low-level disruption is eliminated.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the school, while covering a range of different abilities, is below average. As a result of improved teaching students are now making good progress. For the last two years the proportion of students achieving five good GCSE grades has been in line with the national average. By the end of Key Stage 4, levels of attainment in most subjects, including English and mathematics, are on course to be above average this year.
- Standards in English have risen sharply. Progress is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Results in English at the end of Key Stage 4, in 2013, were well above the national average because many students made rapid progress. This positive trend has continued in 2014. The school has made good use of early entry to GCSE English, which has resulted in the number of students entered gaining a grade C or above.
- In 2013, the proportion of students making and exceeding the progress expected of them in mathematics was in line with national averages. Results in mathematics rose considerably from below average in 2012 to the national average in 2013. Although improving, progress in science is not as strong as in other subjects. Consequently, standards, including those achieved by the most able, are not as high as in English and mathematics.
- Marked improvements to the quality of teaching in the sixth form have resulted in students making good progress. Students leave the sixth form with grades that are above average in some subjects and broadly average in others. This has resulted in an increase in the number of students going on to university.
- The school receives 'catch-up' funding for additional support for students who have not achieved Level 4 in English and mathematics when they enter the school. As a result of the extra help provided, these students achieve well. Students in Year 7 make exceptionally good progress in developing their literacy skills.
- Students supported by additional funding (pupil premium) make better progress in mathematics and English at Key Stage 4 than this group of students nationally. In 2013, the gap in attainment between students supported by the pupil premium and other students at the school was under half a GCSE grade in English and just over half a grade in mathematics. However, these gaps are closing this year.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those supported offsite, while making good progress, do not attain as well as other students in the school. This is because they often have much lower starting points and some support has not been as successful as expected. However, the school has taken appropriate action to tackle this.
- The provision made for students who are taught away from the school site is carefully monitored and ensures they make the progress they should.
- Although increasing, the percentages of the most able students attaining A\* and A grades in a number of subjects, including science, are below the national picture.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Successful teaching results in students' good progress and improving attainment in most subjects, including mathematics and English. Relationships between staff and students are a strength of the school and have an increasingly positive impact on students' learning, achievement and behaviour.
- Skilful questioning and teachers' spoken advice, especially in English lessons and in the sixth form, result in students making good and sometimes outstanding progress in their learning. Students are clear about what they need to do to extend their learning in order to meet and exceed their targets for improvement.
- Teachers carry out regular assessments of students' progress, which are used effectively to identify students who need additional help in order to continue to make good progress.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which is used to engage and challenge students. Teachers have good knowledge of examination requirements and help students to reach the standards necessary to be successful.
- The promotion of literacy is planned for well in lessons outside of English, and students are given good opportunities to expand and develop their skills through a variety of activities and tasks.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Progress made by students is good and improving as a result of the teaching they receive. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve, which encourages students to stretch and to challenge themselves.
- The learning needs of students' supported by additional funding (pupil premium), disabled students and those who have special educational needs are met well. Strong teaching in English is shared locally as a model of good practice to accelerate achievement of students receiving additional funding.
- Although improving, the quality of teaching in science is not yet as strong as in other departments in the school. The most able students are not always challenged to reach the highest standards.
- A small number of teachers do not target oral feedback well enough to ensure that all students know how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve their learning. In some lessons, teaching does not challenge all students fully, which results in them not moving on fast enough from their starting points.
- Marking is not well developed in all subjects. Although helpful marking is evident in some subject areas, good practice is not consistently applied in all subjects. In some cases, marking is not detailed enough to enable students to understand how to improve their work. In other cases, students do not respond to improvements called for by teachers. In a very few instances, marking was not carried out regularly enough to monitor students' progress in their learning.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of students is good. Students' attitudes to learning in all year groups, including in the sixth form and in off-site provision are positive and they are motivated to work hard and do well.

- Staff form exceptionally good relationships with students, which have a positive impact on students' learning, engagement and behaviour.
- During break times and between lessons, students' behaviour around the school and in the playgrounds is calm and purposeful. They show high levels of respect for the school building and for each other. Students are punctual to lessons.
- Attendance has improved year on year and is currently showing further improvement that will bring it above the national average. Persistent absence has also fallen below national figures and this is having a positive impact on student achievement.
- Exclusions have dropped significantly and are currently well below the latest national figures. Behavioural incidents similarly have fallen sharply as a result of the school's robust, well-thought-out and consistently implemented behaviour policy. During the inspection, students commented that the marked improvement in behaviour has made the school a happy place to be, where students now enjoy their learning and want to do well.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Leaders make sure that access to the school is secure and staff are checked carefully for their suitability prior to appointment. All students spoken to by inspectors during formal meetings and around the school felt safe at the school. In practical lessons, students show a good understanding of potential hazards and use equipment safely.
- Students have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe around the school. School records show bullying and racist incidents are rare. Students confirmed that the school takes swift and decisive action to resolve incidents quickly and effectively.
- Students are taught how to manage their behaviour. This teaching is particularly strong in citizenship, and is demonstrated positively through students' interactions with each other, staff and visiting adults. Students show high levels of respect and tolerance for other cultures and religions and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Very occasionally, there is still some low-level disruption that slows down the pace of learning in lessons. This is usually when teaching fails to challenge and engage students fully and is why behaviour is not yet outstanding.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- School leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching, increased the rate of pupils' progress and raised standards in English and mathematics. They have high expectations of what staff and students can achieve and have ambitions to bring further improvement this year. They work well with local authority advisers to bring about improvements to the school.
- Robust and thorough analysis of the school's strengths and areas of development have enabled school leaders to understand and evaluate whole-school priorities accurately. For example, senior leaders ensure equality of opportunity for all groups of students, by targeting additional help effectively in order to bring about and sustain improvements in attendance, behaviour and achievement.
- All leaders hold staff accountable for the progress made by students. Systems for monitoring the

quality of teaching and for the management of staff performance are thorough, rigorous and effective. Staff needs are addressed through well-directed professional development and appropriate support. These measures have improved the quality of teaching and raised achievement.

- The leadership of the sixth form is good. Sustained improvement in the quality of teaching has resulted in the increasingly good progress made by students.
  - Subject leaders are supported well by senior leaders. As a result, they have grown in confidence and in their use of data to monitor students' progress and attainment. They are fully involved in improving the quality of teaching in their departments.
  - Students have good choice of subjects and a broad range of opportunities for learning outside lessons. The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its students well. Recently the school has audited its provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in order to identify any gaps and to ensure it can be comprehensively demonstrated in all areas of learning.
  - The school provides helpful guidance for its students. Year 6 students attend the school for two weeks at the end of the summer term to ensure they are fully integrated and aware of the high levels of commitment and effort expected of them. Students receive guidance when choices are made, through the school's planned programmes and by independent careers services. This has resulted in a sharp reduction in the number of students who are not in employment, education or training when they leave the school and an increase in the number of students going on to higher education.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors take an active role in the management of staff performance and in improving the quality of teaching. They hold all leaders, including subject managers, to account for the progress students make and ensure pay awards are linked to improved performance.
  - Governors have a wide range of skills, including the ability to analyse and evaluate progress and attainment data and understand the strengths and areas of development of the school well. They use this knowledge to challenge senior leaders to ensure all groups of students at the school, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, are supported appropriately in order to make good or better progress.
  - They manage the school's budget well and ensure additional funding (pupil premium) is used effectively so that it has a positive impact on raising the achievement of these students, and improving their behaviour and attendance.
  - Governors take their responsibility to safeguard students very seriously and these arrangements meet statutory requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121157
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	446973

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

<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
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	681
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	75
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Little
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Goodchild
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01485 534541
<b>Fax number</b>	01485 535251
<b>Email address</b>	head@smithdon.norfolk.sch.uk

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