

Copleston High School

Copleston Road, Ipswich, IP4 5HD

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school provides well for its students and as a result, their achievement is good.
- Students arrive in school with attainment which is broadly average for their age. By the end of Year 11, their examination results are better than the national average.
- Teaching and learning are good in most lessons. Some teaching is outstanding.
- Students who need extra help are given good support. As a result, they are making at least as good progress as other students and the gaps between different groups are closing.
- Students' numeracy and literacy skills are developed well through a range of activities.
- Teaching assistants and support workers contribute well in lessons and make sure that all students understand their tasks.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Students show respect for each other, adults and equipment.
- Students are keen to play their part in the school's success. They say they feel valued and respected and appreciate the range of opportunities available to them.
- The sixth form is good. Students make progress because of good or better teaching.
- The Principal and senior staff lead the school well. They check teaching carefully and make sure that the standard of students' learning remains high.
- Leaders have high ambitions for the school and its students. This is equally true for personal development as well as academic achievement.
- School self-evaluation is accurate. Senior staff know the school's strengths and where improvement is required.
- The governing body is effective and shares the school's high ambition. They make sure that staff are held to account for the school's performance and the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a small minority of lessons, students do not make enough progress because activities are not sufficiently well linked to students' abilities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons of which 12 were joint observations with senior leaders.
- They held discussions with students, senior leaders, teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, the local authority and independent advisers who work with the school.
- They checked students' books as well as a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and information about students' progress. Inspectors also looked at documents relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The results of the 18 responses to the Parent View website were also considered.

Inspection team

Keith Selby Thomas, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sa'ad Khaldi	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector
Christopher Cheswright	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average secondary school.
- Less than a fifth of students are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are broadly average.
- The proportion of students whose first language is not English is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- A small number of students attend off-site provision at Suffolk New College and Otley College.
- A few sixth form students study courses at other local schools within the North-East Ipswich partnership.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - checking that activities in lessons are suitable for all students to make progress
 - making sure that the wide range of successful strategies used in the best lessons is fully developed by all teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students achieve well. They start school with attainment which is average for their age. They do so well that when they leave school their results are better than the average for all other schools.
- GCSE results are above average. Attainment in mathematics is significantly better than average. The progress made by students across a wide range of subjects is impressive. This is confirmed by lesson observation and work scrutiny.
- The school's 2012 results in English, though remaining above average, were disappointing. This has been addressed and current progress information strongly suggest that this year's results will see a return to previous levels, which were significantly better than average.
- The pupil premium is used well and the progress of eligible students is given a high priority by senior leaders and all staff. Funding is used to provide a range of support, including small group tuition and extra classes. Results for these students in English and mathematics have typically been the equivalent of up to one grade lower than their peers; this is now halved.
- The progress of students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs is good and in some cases outstanding. All teachers are aware of the needs of these students and plan so that they are properly supported. As a result, they do well through Key Stages 3 and 4 and successfully move on to sixth form studies.
- Good support is provided for students in Year 7 who still find reading difficult. Their progress is checked regularly and records show that almost all have made good progress since arriving at the school.
- Some students are entered for GCSE mathematics early in Year 11. Those meeting or exceeding their target grade may begin to study other areas, such as statistics. Overall, achievement in mathematics, especially the proportion of students who gain A and A* grades in GCSE, shows that this activity is supporting students' progress. As a result, preparation for sixth form study is improving and the number studying mathematics at AS level is increasing.
- The progress of students who attend off-site provision is carefully monitored and they achieve well.
- In the sixth form, students make at the least the progress they should make. This is improving due to robust progress checking and to teaching which is at least good across a broad range of courses. Students praised the way their progress is checked and note how this contributes to improvement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good throughout the school and, at times, it is outstanding. English, mathematics and a range of other subjects are effectively taught and, as a result, students achieve well.
- Teachers aim high. Students know they are expected to work hard and complete tasks. They are constantly challenged to deepen their understanding. For instance, in a French lesson the

students, many of whom are new to this subject, were encouraged to make all of their verbal contributions without speaking English. They were confident to do so, reflecting the good teaching they have received so far.

- Students' work is marked regularly and thoroughly. In lessons, teachers are clear to make sure that students have understood their tasks before moving to the next stage. Students say that teachers make clear what it is they need to do to improve.
- Teachers use a range of clever strategies to make sure that students make rapid progress. In a history lesson, students were encouraged to provide criticism for their classmates' answers. This was skilfully managed by the teacher so that a robust debate followed, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of the topic.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and some is outstanding. Some Year 13 students were asked to consider the qualities of the writing of very young children. Through the skilful direction of the teacher, they were able to see that what they initially thought of as 'scribbles' included many features of emerging writing skills. These students made exceptional progress in a short space of time.
- In a few lessons, tasks are not appropriately matched to the students' abilities. As a result, some students become disengaged and make too little progress.
- The relationship between teachers and students in lessons is an important strength. Teachers encourage their students to be confident in offering answers and discussing them with other students, helping to improve their work. Praise is used appropriately and students' achievements are frequently highlighted.
- Teachers work hard to create an attractive learning environment. Classrooms are bright and feature high quality displays of students' work. There are also innovative features, such as the 'Thought Walls' in classrooms where students are able to give their views on teaching and learning.
- Teaching assistants and other support workers play an important role in making sure that students achieve well. Their teamwork is evident in lessons. They know the students well, respond quickly to any additional needs and show good subject knowledge when supporting learning in class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding

- Copleston is an orderly community. Students know the rules and are courteous and respectful to each other, adults and visitors. They spoke openly to inspectors and displayed a genuine sense of pride in their school.
 - Students told inspectors that behaviour in lessons and in the school generally is good. They also said that disruption in lessons is rare and when it occurs it is quickly dealt with. They feel safe and are made aware in assemblies and lessons of the dangers which may face young people.
 - Incidents of bullying are rare; students know how to deal with these and are confident to turn to staff for support. On the few occasions they occur, they are recorded and quickly followed up.
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- The school has created several innovative schemes to support students' welfare and development. Student support workers maintain a high profile and are constantly available to respond to students' needs. Break-time supervision is well staffed and students know that adult support is close by.
- The student leader programme plays an important role in peer mentoring and supporting new students. Students are identified by wearing 'hoodies' which, as the school self-evaluation document correctly describes, 'is a deliberate intention to turn a previously negative perception of a young person into a positive one'. This aspect of the school's work receives positive comments from within the school and the local community.
- Sixth form students make a good contribution to the life of the school. They provide good role models for younger students and support them as they progress through the school.
- Attendance is above average and is checked carefully to make sure that any absence is quickly dealt with. Students are punctual and make sure that they arrive to school and lessons on time.

The leadership and management is good

- The ambition and determination of the Principal and senior leaders to do well is evident in all of the school's work. Self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders know what needs to be done to continue to be successful and have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection.
 - A detailed programme of lesson observation and appropriate training where necessary are strong features of senior leaders work. As a result, teaching continues to improve. Senior leaders know that they need to maintain this activity to increase the amount of outstanding teaching.
 - Effective work with local authority and other advisers has helped the Principal leaders to maintain a focus on required improvements. The school uses this and other support well, and maintains an open mind when considering the use of external resources to support its own efforts to improve.
 - There are well-developed policies for all areas of school activity. This includes the high profile given to literacy. As a result, students' development in this key skill is an important part of teachers' planning in all subjects.
 - The sixth form is well managed and senior leaders make sure that good opportunities are provided for all. Students speak very highly of the support and guidance they receive when entering the sixth form and in preparation for the next stage of the education, training or employment.
 - Subjects are organised so as to meet the needs of all students. There are several innovative features; for instance, WOW (what's on Wednesday) provides extra opportunity, once a week, for students to engage with a range of interesting activities including art, sport, dance and horticulture. This supplements an already varied programme of lunchtime and before- and after-school clubs and activities.
 - The promotion of the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.
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This is evident in lessons and through a range of other activities. For instance, all students are given the opportunity to take part in a residential trip during their time in school. There is a wide selection of creative activities with a strong focus on music, and the school has links with China and Africa.

- A good programme of assemblies gives students opportunities to reflect on some of life's deeper issues. For instance, in one assembly, older students were given the opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of happiness and how material possessions may not always provide the answer.
 - Senior leaders make strong efforts to keep parents, carers and the local community informed about the school for instance, through the very informative website and the high quality newsletter, the Copleston Chronicle.
 - Careful attention is paid to safeguarding and child protection and statutory requirements are met.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is properly organised to play its full part in the life of the school. It challenges the Principal and senior leaders in tackling areas for improvement. A carefully planned programme of visits means that the school's work is regularly checked. Governors are trained well and properly prepared to work with the school in areas such as safeguarding, child protection and staff recruitment. The governors have a good knowledge of how well the school is doing and a clear picture of students' achievements. They also understand the teacher appraisal system and what is being done to tackle any underperformance. They know that teachers' objectives are linked to improved outcomes for students and that pay progression is dependent on these being achieved. Finances are properly used and governors carefully monitor the use of pupil premium funding to bring about improvement for eligible students.
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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	136827
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	413450

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1804
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Robinson
Headteacher	Shaun Common (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 March 2009
Telephone number	01473 277240
Fax number	01473 277241
Email address	mail@copleston.suffolk.sch.uk

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