

# Farlingaye High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124836
<b>Local Authority</b>	SUFFOLK
<b>Inspection number</b>	293127
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lindsay Hebditch 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
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1418
6th form	326
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Caddick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Sue Hargadon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Ransom Road Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 4JX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01394385720
<b>Fax number</b>	01394387226

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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

Farlingaye High School is a large, popular comprehensive school which serves the market town of Woodbridge and a predominantly rural area in southeast Suffolk. The standards of students entering the school are close to the national average. Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who receive free school meals or have a statement of special educational needs is low. Some 60% of students join the sixth form on completion of their GCSE courses, together with an increasing number who are attracted from other local schools. The school was awarded specialist status as a Mathematics and Computing College from September 2002 and as a specialist school for creative arts in 2007. It is also a Leading Edge school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Farlingaye High School provides an outstanding standard of education. There is a real sense of community in the school and a very strong work ethic. The high quality displays of students' work which decorate every corridor and classroom vividly demonstrate the pride that the school takes in the achievements of its students.

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is very ably supported by the senior leadership team and governors. Standards are high and have continued to improve since the last inspection. However the school constantly strives to raise standards still further and sets itself challenging targets which are almost always met. The school's self-evaluation provides an accurate reflection of its strengths.

The personal development and well-being of students are outstanding. Students' views are actively sought and figure prominently in the school's decision making. All students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles, there are excellent levels of participation in sports and school teams enjoy great success. Teachers have genuine enthusiasm for the subjects they teach and their lessons reflect it. Behaviour in lessons is good. The school's many initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been successful, particularly in ensuring that students of all abilities have the opportunity to achieve their potential in lessons. The school has recognised that the relevance and quantity of homework that teachers set varies between subjects and is taking steps to provide greater consistency. Attendance is satisfactory overall and is improving but the school has yet to identify all of the reasons why it is not better.

The school's specialist status in mathematics and computing has been used well to support the development of the whole school curriculum. Students are provided with excellent opportunities to use computers in lessons and in their independent research and demonstrate high levels of research and analytical skills.

Parents have very high expectations of the school and although most of them feel that the school meets their expectations, a small minority thinks that the behaviour of students could be improved still further. The school has outstanding capacity to improve and provides excellent value for money.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 1

Sixth form provision is outstanding. Students make excellent progress in relation to their starting points owing to the outstanding teaching they receive. They achieve a good proportion of high grades in their final examinations with notable success in the school's specialisms of mathematics and computing. Relations between teachers and students are open and honest. Students are encouraged to take a high degree of responsibility for their learning and relish the challenge. Attendance is good. Students receive excellent support and guidance. Personal targets are set, monitored and revised regularly to ensure that any concerns are rapidly addressed and that every individual capitalises on their potential. Students show a high degree of responsibility within the school community, acting as mentors to younger students and initiating and participating in cultural, sporting and charitable events. They benefit from a very broad range of enrichment opportunities. Leadership and management are outstanding. Increasing student numbers have been accommodated well in the new buildings and the excellent information and communication technology facilities they provide enhance the learning ethos. In response

to students' demand, the school is planning to strengthen vocational, work-related and financial awareness provision in the sixth form. Students are well prepared to progress to higher education and do so in significant numbers.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Analyse more carefully the reasons for students' absence and continue to take action to improve attendance.
- Review the procedures for setting homework.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Achievement and standards are outstanding. The school has maintained standards which are consistently well above average for all students, regardless of age or ability. The excellent standard achieved by students with learning difficulties and disabilities is a particularly strong feature of the school. Students make outstanding progress in Key Stage 3 and produce excellent results in external tests in English, mathematics and science. Students also achieve high standards in Key Stage 4. The proportion of students who gain at least five GCSE grades A\*–C is well above the national and local authority averages and has improved since the previous inspection. Sixth form students make excellent progress and produce very good results in their GCE AS and A level subjects. The school has consistently met or exceeded the challenging targets it sets as a mathematics and computing college.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students are very helpful and courteous. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure there. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, although a minority of parents feels that it could be improved still further. Spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is excellent. The school makes a particular effort to build up the self-esteem of students and uses every available opportunity to make them aware of the challenges associated with living in a multi-cultural society. Students take full advantage of the many opportunities to take responsibility in the classroom and around the school. They have a strong voice; their views are actively sought and figure prominently in the school's decision making. Students appreciate the value of a healthy lifestyle, take advantage of the healthy food options that the canteen provides and participate well in sports. Attendance is satisfactory overall and is improving but the school has yet to identify all of the reasons why it is not better. Sixth formers take their responsibilities within the school very seriously and act as excellent role models for younger students.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers know their subjects well and plan imaginative lessons which are both challenging and fun. Lessons include clear learning objectives which are well matched to students' differing learning needs. Consequently all students thrive and make exceptional progress. Students have good access to computers and demonstrate high levels of research and analytical skills. Teaching assistants know the students they are helping well and provide outstanding support for those who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties. Many teachers use new technology very effectively to promote good learning. Students are set performance targets which are carefully matched to examination requirements. These targets are monitored very carefully so that students are well aware of the progress they are making and how they could improve. Assessment is accurate and thorough. Assignments and homework generally make appropriate demands of students. However, the school has recognised that the relevance and quantity of homework that teachers set varies between subjects and is taking steps to provide greater consistency. Teaching in the sixth form is also outstanding. Students develop good independent learning skills and as a result they gain in confidence, make very good progress and achieve high standards.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The school's curriculum is outstanding. It is broad, balanced and successfully meets the needs and aspirations of all students and their parents. The school's specialist status in mathematics and computing has been used well to support the development of the whole school curriculum. Students in Key Stage 3 have separate lessons in information and communication technology and can choose from a good range of technology subjects. Students in Key Stage 4 select from an excellent range of academic and vocational options. The good alternative curriculum caters successfully for those students who benefit from a more practical approach to learning. The outstanding range of extra-curricular activities helps students to consolidate existing skills and develop new ones. Participation rates in clubs, visits, music, drama and sport are very high and school teams and productions enjoy considerable success. Provision for personal, social and health education prepares students effectively for their roles as responsible and informed young adults. Sixth form students can choose from a wide range of GCE AS and A level subjects, together with an increasing range of vocational options.

### Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding because of the commitment of all staff to student welfare and the excellent systems that support it. A parent praised 'the personal touch in a large school'. Students feel safe and have excellent relationships with their teachers. They appreciate the personal targets which they are set and the careful monitoring of their progress

towards achieving them. Vulnerable students and those with special educational needs are very well supported so that they achieve as well as other students. The school's comprehensive support network is managed from the excellent, well-resourced student support area. Students enjoy easy access to advice on personal problems from a large team of trained student mentors, a school counsellor and an educational welfare officer. Careers advice is good. Because of this, students make wise choices when they enter the sixth form, complete their courses successfully and progress to higher education or employment. Requirements for child protection are met and suitable procedures for ensuring the health and safety of staff and students are in place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Leadership and management of the school and sixth form are outstanding. The head teacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, pursues excellence with passion, personal dedication and boundless enthusiasm. Her success is evident in the rising standards of the students and the high regard in which the overwhelming majority of parents and the local community hold the school. Performance management works very well at all levels. Challenging targets are set, largely met, and frequently exceeded because self-evaluation is accurate, problems are identified quickly and remedial actions are swift. This well-focused support means that teachers whose lessons were previously assessed as satisfactory now teach many good or outstanding lessons. Morale in the school is high. Governance is outstanding. Governors know and support the school well but challenge its managers vigorously when they think it is necessary, as in the recent introduction of longer lesson times. The school has established many successful partnerships with external agencies and the wider educational community, helping it to ensure that it focuses on the correct priorities and that collective action is taken when necessary. Resources are used well throughout the school but particularly to improve the performance of those students most in need. The school provides excellent value for money.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 March 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Farlingaye High School, Ransom Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4JX

I would like to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We met and talked with many of you during our two days at the school, watched as many lessons as we could and looked at the quality of your work, including the wonderful displays which decorate every corridor and classroom in the school. We also received more than five hundred responses to our questionnaire for parents. Please pass on our thanks to them for taking the trouble to reply.

I am sure you will be delighted to know that we think Farlingaye High School is an outstanding school. There is a real sense of community in the school and you work hard. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is very ably supported by her senior leadership team and governors. Standards in the school are high and have continued to improve since the last time we inspected it. The school takes very good care of you. Your views are actively sought and figure prominently in the school's decision making. We were pleased to see that the school encourages you to adopt healthy lifestyles and that so many of you participate in sports and the school's many successful teams. You told us how much you appreciate the quality of teaching and we could understand why you enjoy your lessons so much. Your parents have very high expectations of the school and although most of them feel that the school meets their expectations, a small minority thinks that the behaviour of students could be improved still further. The sixth form is also outstanding. Sixth form students make excellent progress and produce very good results in their GCE AS and A level subjects.

We identified two things that the school could do to help it improve further. These were.

- Analyse more carefully the reasons for students' absence and continue to take action to improve attendance.
- Review the procedures for setting homework.

Keep up the excellent work and thanks once again for your help.

Lindsay Hebditch HMI