



Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120697
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291835
Inspection date 13 March 2007
Reporting inspector Martin Cragg HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	Station Road
School category	Foundation		Alford
Age range of pupils	11–18		Lincolnshire LN13 9HY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01507462403
Number on roll (school)	542	Fax number	01507462125
Number on roll (6th form)	125		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Barry Peach
		Headteacher	Miss Angela Francis
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–18	13 March 2007	291835

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in a one day visit.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and selects pupils from the top 30% of the ability range in this mainly rural part of Lincolnshire. Pupils travel to the school from the local town but also from some distance away. Their attainment on entry is above average. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and statements of special educational need are well below average. Fewer pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low and very few have English as an additional language. The school has had specialist status in business and enterprise since 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school in their responses to the questionnaire. They described 'an excellent school' which creates 'an excellent learning environment' where pupils develop as 'polite, friendly and confident' young people who achieve high standards.

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School provides outstanding education for its pupils. In its last inspection in 2003 it was judged to be a very good school and it has improved further since then. In particular, it has used its specialist status in business and enterprise to broaden the curriculum and raise achievement. Pupils reach standards that are consistently high and improve each year. However, the school recognises that it needs to achieve more of the higher grades at GCSE in some subjects. Pupils make exceptional progress by the end of Year 9, in the top 3% nationally, and outstanding progress by the end of Year 11. In the sixth form, students also achieve consistently high standards and make outstanding progress. The school has very high expectations and sets challenging targets which are achieved by almost all pupils.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They have exemplary attitudes to their learning. Their behaviour and attendance are excellent. They show respect for each other and have very well developed social skills. This is seen in their willingness to make a contribution to the school through the numerous opportunities to take responsibility and to organise activities. Sixth form students are very strongly involved in the rest of the school and provide impressive examples for others. There is a very strong sense of community in the school.

The school has very thorough systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Its judgement is that teaching overall is very good and outstanding in the sixth form. Inspection confirms this judgement. Relationships in lessons are very good and teachers use a wide range of activities and approaches which encourage pupils to think about their work and to apply their understanding. However, in the few satisfactory lessons, there is less challenge and pupils are not always engaged in their learning. There are very detailed assessment procedures which ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve further.

The curriculum is broad and very well enriched by the wide range of additional activities and trips. Pupils benefit from a very good range of courses at GCSE and sixth form level which provides well for different interests and abilities. The school's specialist business and enterprise status has had significant impact through strong academic performance and broadening links with the local community and businesses.

The school's care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils commented very strongly on the commitment of staff and their willingness to provide additional help with work. Pupils who find learning more difficult or who are underachieving are promptly identified and appropriate support is put in place. Pupils feel that staff know them well and are confident that any problems they have will be dealt with effectively.

The overall quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher provides exceptional clarity of direction and vision for the school and this was recognised by many parents in the questionnaire. Senior leaders, staff and governors share this vision and there is a strong sense of common purpose. The high expectations for achievement are very well combined with the development of pupils' personal qualities. The school has a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and its self evaluation is accurate. However, the good systems for monitoring performance and evaluating progress are not yet used consistently by all subject leaders. The school has successfully addressed the issues raised in the last inspection and has improved achievement each year. There is very good capacity to improve further and the school provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Sixth form provision is outstanding and students achieve consistently high standards. They make excellent progress across the range of ability. The sixth form is well led and students receive very good guidance and support. There is a regular and rigorous system for reviewing students' progress which ensures that early support is provided for those who are not keeping up with their targets. This is successful as shown in the very high retention rates on the good range of courses. The school's business and enterprise status is strongly reflected in the commitment to vocational and applied courses. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. They also take significant roles in the rest of the school, willingly giving their time to help in a range of clubs and activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils achieving higher grades at GCSE by ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently high across all subjects.
- Improve the consistency with which subject leaders use the systems for monitoring and evaluating performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils enter the school with attainment which is above average. They make outstanding progress throughout the school, in the top 10% nationally and comparing very favourably with similar schools. They reach consistently high standards at all key stages. However, in a few subjects at GCSE, whilst the proportion of pupils achieving at least a grade C is above average, the proportion achieving grade A or A* is below average or lower than in comparable subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make at least good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils have exemplary attitudes, behaviour and attendance. They have well-developed social skills and say that they feel safe at all times. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strongly established through the ethos of the school and the wide range of activities and opportunities. Pupils make healthy choices and participate actively in sports. They take on responsibility willingly, exemplified by the large number of sixth formers who help in various study clubs. They are confident and demonstrate impressive skills for their future working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching and learning overall are good and outstanding in the sixth form. Most lessons are at least good and often better. The school has a detailed understanding of the strengths of teaching and knows where improvement is required. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and planning is thorough. Relationships are strong and expectations are high in most lessons. Where teaching is less effective, lessons lack pace and challenge. Assessment is regular and detailed. Pupils value teachers' comments on how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is broad and well matched to the needs of pupils. There are additional subjects in Key Stage 3 and a wide range of choices in Year 10 and beyond. Courses are well designed to develop pupils' learning skills and independence. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved since the last inspection and used effectively. There is a very good range of additional activities and events which enrich the curriculum and develop pupils' skills and confidence. These include trips abroad and the organisation of school events. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from innovative summer schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils receive outstanding care and guidance. They speak highly of staff commitment to their well-being and achievement, a view which is echoed by parents. Pupils with specific learning needs are very well supported and their progress is reviewed regularly. Guidance on subject choices and entry to the sixth form is very effective. Pupils are encouraged to participate in school events and take on responsibility through an innovative awards scheme. They are very well known in this small school. All safeguarding procedures are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher provides a very clear direction for the school and there is a strong sense of common purpose amongst staff and governors. There are high expectations of academic achievement and personal development. Subject leaders are effective and achievement has improved since the last inspection. However, the good systems for monitoring and evaluation are not yet used consistently. Governors know the school well and review its performance with increasing rigour. The school is committed to meeting the needs of all its pupils and there are very good links with local schools, the community, businesses and other agencies. The issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed effectively and the school has very good capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ 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	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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

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

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2	
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	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	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 March 2007

Dear Students

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Station Road, Alford, Lincolnshire, LN13 9HY

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter summarises the results of the inspection. However, first, I would like to thank you for your co-operation during my visit. I was very impressed with those of you I met and valued your comments and opinions. You represented the school extremely well.

The inspection found that yours is an outstanding school. You reach consistently high standards in your work and make excellent progress throughout the school. Your behaviour and attitude to learning is exemplary. You take on responsibility willingly and involve yourselves enthusiastically in the wide range of activities provided. You have a broad range of courses to choose from with particular strength in the business and enterprise specialism of the school. The teaching you receive is generally good and often better. It is outstanding in the sixth form. Relationships in the school are excellent and there is a strong sense of community. You told me that there is very little bullying and that you appreciate the support provided by staff. The headteacher leads the school very well and there is a clear vision for its development.

There are some areas where the school needs to continue to develop. These issues came out in my discussions with students.

- In some subjects teaching is not as strong as in most and this affects the proportion of higher grades at GCSE.
- Subject leaders do not use the systems to monitor the work in their areas consistently, which contributes to variation in the quality of lessons you receive.

I am sure that your school will continue to improve. I wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg

Her Majesty's Inspector