

The Skegness Grammar School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120696
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	367422
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Joan Hewitt HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	716
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jamie Gordon
Headteacher	David Ward
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2008
School address	Vernon Road Skegness PE25 2QS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The boarding provision was not part of this inspection. One inspector focused on safeguarding for half a day. Inspectors observed 27 teachers in 28 lessons. One inspector also conducted a series of brief lesson visits focused on the engagement of the most-able students. Meetings were held with groups of staff, students and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, data and analysis, policies, the school's monitoring records and the minutes of the governing body meetings. They considered the responses to questionnaires from 86 parents and carers, 108 students and 46 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective has the school been in promoting at least satisfactory attendance for all groups of students and so enabling them to achieve well and develop effective workplace skills and personal qualities?
- How effective have leaders and managers been in ensuring progress is good or better across all subjects, especially English, mathematics and specialist subjects?
- Is teaching consistently meeting the needs of all groups of students, particularly the most able and those who struggle to attend school regularly, so that they all make good or better progress?
- Do leaders effectively monitor and accurately evaluate the school's performance and use this evaluation to secure clear and sustained improvement particularly for the most able and those who struggle to attend school regularly?
- How effective have leaders and managers been in ensuring good or better outcomes for students in the sixth form?

Information about the school

Skegness Grammar School is a smaller-than-average secondary school. It selects students by ability. It gained specialist status in sports in September 2001 and mathematics and computing in 2006. In 2008 the school gained a third specialism in science. Students join the school from a range of primary schools in a wide geographical area. The school has boarding facilities; currently 48 students are boarding. Almost all students are of White British heritage although other ethnic groups are represented and of these, the largest group is of Black African heritage. The proportion of students that speak English as an additional language is below that found nationally and all speak English fluently. The known eligibility for free school meals is below average. The number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that found nationally and the number of students with a statement of special educational need is also below average. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and the Sportsmark Gold award.

At the time of the inspection the headmaster had been in post three weeks.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Skegness Grammar School provides a good standard of education for students in its care. One of the main strengths is the outstanding work done as a specialist sports college. This has resulted in students having access to a variety of exciting activities which enables them to develop good personal skills. The good, and sometimes outstanding, work the school does with its many partners has also resulted in a wide range of opportunities for students that the school could not offer without this support.

Students are happy and feel safe. Behaviour around the school and at break and lunchtime is excellent and this supports their good social skills. Students' behaviour is good in lessons too because of the warm relationships they have with their teachers. Last year attendance was low because a small number of students struggled to attend school regularly. The school have been successful in addressing this and attendance is now in line with national averages. This is enabling students to develop satisfactory and often good workplace skills.

Students make good progress because lessons help them to develop good working habits and ethos. There is a strong core of good teaching in the school and students have very positive attitudes to learning. The progress students make in the sixth form is also good. They respond well to opportunities to learn independently. However, these opportunities are not fully consistent across the school and occasionally the most-able students are not sufficiently challenged.

The newly appointed headmaster has quickly grasped the challenges facing the school and improvements have gained a fresh impetus. After only three weeks in post it is too soon to see the impact of these actions. However, the foundations for success are good because of the established systems in place for monitoring the schools' work. This has given senior leaders a good view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school.

Since the last inspection there has been some variability in the attainment of students and in the progress they make. Concerted efforts by senior leaders have been successful in addressing this and the school's current data show that progress is good overall. Progress in English, science and physical education is good. The rate of progress in mathematics is satisfactory and improving quickly.

One reason for the improving progress is the effective monitoring done by senior leaders. Middle leaders are playing an increasing role in this monitoring. The school tracks the progress individual students make well and senior and middle leaders have had success in implementing effective strategies to address underachievement. Senior and middle leaders also check the quality of lessons and students' work regularly and they have a good level of information. However, the analysis of this information lacks precision and consequently

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not all middle and senior leaders have a detailed understanding of emerging patterns in achievement and other outcomes for different groups of students.

The success of the school in improving progress and the effective monitoring of individual students' progress demonstrate the school's good capacity to sustain further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve students' attendance, including those in the sixth form, by ensuring the attendance of different groups is monitored rigorously.
- Accelerate progress so that it is consistently outstanding for all students by
- improving the analysis of the extensive data base so that senior and middle leaders have a precise understanding of the progress different groups of students are making
 - improving systems for assessing the needs of students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons by
 - ensuring teachers consistently provide opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills
 - ensuring teachers plan lessons that closely match the needs of individual students and their learning styles.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Learning in the large majority of lessons seen by inspectors was good or better. Students' attitudes to learning are good and they are keen to do well. They make good progress in lessons especially when they have the opportunity to solve problems independently. During lessons they maintain their concentration and they are eager to contribute to discussions.

In this selective school students enter with high levels of attainment. Last year results were disappointing but there are clear signs of swift recovery and the school's own data shows the majority of Year 11 are on track to gain five A* to B grades at GCSE. In other year groups progress is good. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other groups. Students who struggle to attend school regularly make slower progress.

Students socialise well together and bullying is rare so that they feel safe. Lessons and assemblies help students to reflect on the world around them. They are very committed citizens and demonstrate this through their whole-hearted support of a wide range of charities. For example, it is a tradition for many students to participate in the Sea Bank marathon, raising significant amounts of money for local charities. Most students take advantage of the excellent range of activities provided through the school's specialist sports college status which supports them in adopting generally healthy lifestyles. Students develop good cultural awareness through the many trips and visits open to them.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and this promotes students' enjoyment and confidence. Students are provided with interesting and varied tasks that capture their interest so that learning moves on at a brisk pace. Teachers often ask students to evaluate their own and each other's work and this helps them to identify exactly what steps they need to take to improve. There is a strong core of good teaching in the school and in these lessons tasks are designed to meet the needs of all students. For example in a good English lesson, exploring the novel, 'Of mice and men', the teacher used carefully designed questions to engage girls who previously lacked confidence. As a result the girls enjoyed their success and gained confidence in giving answers to increasingly difficult questions. This good practice is not fully consistent across the school.

The good curriculum is responsive to students' needs. It provides a comprehensive course to develop students' personal skills. This is further enhanced through thematic days. The impact of the school's specialist subjects is marked in the provision of well-attended exciting clubs and enhancements. For example, students can choose from activities such as fencing, the model railway club and public speaking.

There are warm and positive relationships in the school. Adults demonstrate a good level of care for students. There are some examples of excellent and detailed individual support for students who are experiencing distressing personal circumstances. However, strategies to monitor students whose circumstances make them vulnerable are not systematic.

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Consequently, difficulties that arise are not always identified rapidly. The information and guidance students have at key times is sound. As a result, transitions from primary school and into further education, employment or training are smooth.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has been through a difficult period in which there was some under-achievement. Leaders have demonstrated a good level of ambition and energy in halting this and ensuring good progress. Timely and well-focused work has been done by leaders to secure a good and improving profile of teaching. This has been achieved through a systematic process of observation and coaching. Consequently teachers are enthusiastic and eager to improve their practice. The school's capacity to sustain this strong rate of improvement is good.

Leaders have been conspicuously successful in securing good and often outstanding partnership arrangements which have assisted the school in achieving academic improvement. Students frequently benefit from working with specialists from industry and honing their leadership skills in work they do with primary school pupils.

The careful tracking of individual students' progress has enabled the school to implement effective support where there is underachievement. However, there is not the same rigour in monitoring the wider outcomes for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Arrangements to deal with bullying and discrimination are robust.

The governing body fulfils its role satisfactorily and they offer a sound level of challenge and support. The work governors do with the school ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

The school has a good understanding of its coastal context and particularly the challenges posed by seasonal working in the community. Community cohesion is promoted effectively through local, national and international links. Leaders have enjoyed particular success in promoting cohesion locally. For example, the school has worked with the Sure Start centre to provide information technology training for parents.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Overall, the majority of students make good progress from their starting points. During the inspection, progress in lessons was good. Attendance is low for a significant number of students and this has prevented this group from making good progress. Students' attitudes to learning are good and they develop mature approaches to their responsibilities in and out of school. They take a full role in the life of the school community and contribute fully to the school's excellent role in raising charitable funds.

As in the main school, teaching is good because teachers ensure students benefit from a range of challenging activities. The curriculum meets the academic aspirations of students and prepares them well for further education, employment or training. Retention from Year 12 into Year 13 is above that found nationally. Students speak warmly of the support they get to prepare them for independent life. For example they find the self sufficiency course particularly helpful. Recent work to improve students' attendance is promising but it has not yet had noticeable impact.

Sixth form leaders have satisfactory systems to monitor the progress of students. Leaders and managers have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed with all the statements. They were very positive about the experience their children had at school. A few raised concerns about the quality of some lessons and the quality of communication with school. Inspectors found that the quality of the large majority of lessons is good or better and that the school is taking effective steps to improve this further. Inspectors also found that the school has clear systems to inform parents and carers about students' progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Skegness Grammar School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 716 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	45	43	50	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	45	41	48	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	30	53	62	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	33	42	49	9	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	19	22	51	59	8	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	22	39	45	21	24	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	23	53	62	9	10	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	26	41	49	14	17	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	24	45	52	17	20	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	19	45	52	21	24	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	15	47	55	15	17	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	19	45	52	12	14	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	33	46	53	8	9	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Skegness Grammar School Skegness

PE25 2QS

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We found it very helpful to talk to you, look at your work and visit your lessons. We are pleased to report that Skegness Grammar is a good school. There are some things that the school does very well.

You feel safe in school and your behaviour is good. Your social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is also good.

The school's status as a specialist sports college is providing you with excellent opportunities and helping you to develop healthy lifestyles.

You make good progress because you have good teaching.

Senior leaders and all the staff want the school to be even better so we have asked them to do the following things.

Improve your attendance by checking it regularly.

Improve your progress so that it is outstanding for everyone by looking at the rates of progress different groups are making. They should also check regularly that students who are having problems outside school are getting all the help they need.

Make sure more of your lessons are outstanding by ensuring that lessons help you to be independent and that the work you get is exactly right for each one of you.

You can play your part in improving the school by attending school everyday, even when it is difficult for you, and continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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