

# Skegness Grammar School

Vernon Road, Skegness, PE25 2QS

## Inspection dates

13–14 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Since becoming an academy, examination results have improved impressively.
- Attainment in 2013 GCSE examinations was high, and students made better progress from their starting points than is seen in most schools.
- The sixth form is good. Students attain highly, make good progress and move on successfully to the next stage of education, training or employment.
- The sixth form programme of study and wider enrichment is very effective in meeting students' needs.
- There is much good teaching in the school; this has ensured that more students are now reaching their potential.
- Student progress is carefully tracked, with intervention quickly put in place to support those in need of additional help.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good, particularly in the lessons that offer the greatest intellectual challenge.
- Student's behaviour around the school is good; they are a mature, confident and harmonious community of learners.
- Students feel, and are kept, exceptionally safe on the school site. Their well-being is well attended to by adults.
- Students understand different forms of discrimination and report that bullying is rare, with any incidents dealt with quickly.
- School leaders have tackled the schools weaknesses with energy and precision. They have made great gains at improving student achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the school and turn this into effective planning, monitoring and self-evaluation.
- Subject leaders are increasingly sharing responsibility for ensuring effective teaching and good student progress.
- The governing body has been strengthened and is now in a better position to hold leaders and managers to account. A substantial financial deficit has been recovered.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Teachers sometimes give work that is too easy to the most able. In a few classes, marking does not always help students to improve their work.
- The school does not always work closely enough with parents, carers and students. It does not keep them well enough informed of school plans.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 28 lessons or part lessons, six of these jointly with senior leaders and managers.
- The team visited many different areas of the school and the site during lessons and at break times.
- Meetings were held with three different groups of students, members of the governing body, senior staff, subject and pastoral leaders, as well as a representative of the David Ross Education Trust (DRET).
- The inspection team examined a range of school documentation, including improvement plans and policies, lesson plans, records of lesson monitoring and checks on students' work, and the minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body. Inspectors examined a range of data, both those available to the public and those used by the school to monitor current rates of students' progress and attendance.
- The 33 responses made to the online questionnaire Parent View by the end of the inspection were considered, along with parental surveys conducted by the school. Staff questionnaires taken during the inspection were also considered.

## Inspection team

David Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Vanessa Love

Additional Inspector

Beverley Mabey

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized grammar school.
- The school converted to academy status on joining the David Ross Education Trust in September 2012. When its predecessor school, Skegness Grammar School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The large majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. This is extra government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, or children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well below average.
- The school meets government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in secondary schools.
- No students currently study for part of their education in alternative provision off the school site.
- The school has a number of boarding students who are based on a separate site but educated at the school. This boarding provision was not inspected as part of this visit.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make consistently rapid progress in all classes by making sure that:
  - all teachers fully stretch all students, especially those of the highest ability, so that work is at the right level of difficulty in order for them to achieve well
  - all teachers mark to the same high quality as the best and check that students have learnt from or acted on their advice.
- Improve the school's partnership with parents and carers and with students by providing good information for about the future direction and ambition of the school for the success of all students.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The attainment of students in the 2013 GCSE examinations improved greatly. Attainment was high compared to most schools nationally, across a wide range of subjects. Attainment in other year groups currently in the school has also accelerated in the last year.
- From their starting points, students in the main school now make good progress as they move through the school. In the 2013 results, the progress made in English and mathematics was much stronger than that seen in most schools, notably in the proportion of students making more than the expected progress.
- Different groups of students all make good progress. The relatively small proportion of students with disabilities or special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. In some year groups currently in the school, they are making better progress than other students. This is because their specific needs are identified early and effective support is put in place.
- The relatively small proportion of students who receive support from pupil premium funding are now making progress that is similar to other students, with the gaps closing fully in some year groups. In 2013 the gaps were minimal, with students attaining less than a sixth of a grade lower than other students overall. This is because funding was carefully targeted to provide additional support and resources.
- Many students were entered early for mathematics in 2013, in the winter of Year 11, but success rates are very high. A small number go on to improve their grades in the summer. No students in the school require additional support for literacy or numeracy on entry to the school.
- Students in the sixth form also made good progress in 2013, with results improving strongly. A level students made much stronger progress than that seen in most schools. All students go on successfully to higher education, training or employment.
- In some subjects, and notably science, more able students did not attain as many A\* and A grades as might be expected. The school has recognised this and ensured that, in current year groups, the progress of the more able students is checked more carefully to ensure they reach their full potential.
- Throughout their time in the school, students make strong gains in literacy, numeracy and communication skills. As a result they are resilient, independent and confident learners who play a full, active part in lessons, and show good attitudes to learning.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching helps students to achieve well in most subjects. Leaders' rigorous checking on the quality of teaching shows that this is typically the case. This can be seen in the greatly improved achievement in the main school and sixth form in the 2013 results, and in current strong progress throughout the school.
- Most teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge students to think deeply about their learning. The characteristics of the very best teaching are relentless questioning of students to probe and develop their understanding, encouraging them to explain their reasoning and asking other students to comment or develop the answers further. This was seen, for example, in the

consideration of cross-gender issues within a Shakespeare play.

- Leaders are establishing very effective assessment practice across the school. Teachers make clear to students what is needed to be done to achieve a high grade and students are used to using the examination assessment criteria to assess their own and each other's work.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to students, although very effective in some classes, lacks consistency across the school. Not all teachers provide clear enough advice for students about how to further improve their work. Teachers do not always make sure that students follow up this advice by applying it and showing their teachers that they have understood.
- Student attitudes to learning are generally very good indeed. They show curiosity, and a willingness to fully engage in class, group and individual work. Work is generally very well presented and completed to a high standard, in line with high expectations.
- Where teaching is not yet outstanding, learning is held back because students sometimes mark time as they wait for others to catch up after completing work that does too little to extend their thinking or deepen their skills.

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

- The behaviour of students is good. They show excellent attitudes to learning where teaching is particularly strong, but where tasks can be mundane and lacking in challenge, there is a small amount of inattention.
- Around the school site, students' conduct is exemplary. They are unfailingly polite, helpful and mature in their dealing with adults and with each other. This is also the case when not directly supervised by teachers, as seen in the mature use of the sixth form social and work areas.
- The vertical tutor system provides additional support for students. The newly appointed Pastoral Support Worker is recognised by students and staff as a key figure in dealing with any minor incidents that do occur.
- Attendance has improved strongly since the school became an academy, and is now above the national average and rising. All groups of students attend equally well.
- Teachers in all subjects promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, by providing opportunities for reflection on moral issues and for developing teamwork.
- Safety is outstanding. The school is a very safe and secure environment. Students report feeling completely safe, and they conduct themselves with high regard for their own safety and the well-being of others. Parents are overwhelmingly confident that the school keeps students safe, and all school records support this view.
- Bullying is rare, as confirmed in conversations with students. They have a very good awareness of issues relating to discrimination, and feel that 'e-safety' in particular has a high profile in the school. They feel able to access the support they need from adults in the school.
- Relationships between students and with adults are a particular strength of the school. Many students understand that the school has undergone significant change. As a result, although the great majority are very happy and positive, a few students reported that their opinions are not

always listened to or acted upon.

- The contribution of boarding students is welcomed and appreciated by other students. This is partly because these students bring a cultural diversity that is not found in the local population. Boarding students are very positive about the way that they are integrated into the life of the school.

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

- The school has moved forward strongly since becoming an academy. The headteacher, well supported by an executive headteacher, and by the trust (DRET) have brought stability in management. They set high expectations of the school community and are bringing about significant improvements in students' achievement.
- The current management team inherited a school with severe financial problems, mainly due to over-staffing. This has been tackled urgently and effectively. Leaders have sensitively managed a significant reduction and change in the workforce in the last year. This has had an impact on the stability of the teaching team. However, new structures and systems are now becoming embedded, resulting in an increasing consistency of practice.
- Current senior leaders have a clear vision, based on academic and wider success for all students. They have good, precise and well-thought out plans. Key staff responsibilities are clearly identified and priorities are carefully monitored to make sure that action is taken.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that still require improvement. They check the work of the school regularly and thoroughly, and intervene where they find that things are not good enough.
- The availability and use of school information has improved dramatically. As a result, all leaders and managers are now regularly checking that students are making the progress that they should, and working with staff, students, parents and carers with any students falling behind.
- The school has systems and training in place to check on, and improve, the quality of teaching. Although this is making a difference, school leaders recognise that there is much to be done in terms of ensuring consistency in teaching and in recruiting quality staff in key subjects.
- Staff commented to inspectors that they now have better opportunities for training and development, both within the school and with trust schools and other outside bodies. This is starting to have a greater impact on the quality of teaching.
- Staff are now being held accountable for the quality of teaching and the progress of their students through performance management arrangements.
- Several staff have already been seconded onto senior posts, with the intention of the school developing its own future leaders and managers. The school has also been able to draw on management support from the trust, which has proved to be invaluable.
- The curriculum is highly effective in providing the academic route that the great majority of students seek. A number of students feel that independent advice and guidance for those seeking other future routes is not as well catered for.

- The school is developing leadership and management effectively below senior level. School Improvement Leaders are working effectively in subject areas to support student progress and to intervene where students need additional support.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. The improvements in monitoring teaching and progress seen in the main school are applied with equal rigour in the sixth form. Recent improvements in encouraging study groups are welcomed by students.
- The social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of students is very strong. This is partly due to the wide enrichment programme available, particularly, but not only, in the sporting successes that the school enjoys.
- The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further. The rapid rise in attainment, development of effective management and data systems and the improvements in attendance and teaching have been achieved in a short space of time.
- A minority of students, parents and carers have been unsettled by the turbulence recently affecting the school. Leaders and managers recognise the need to work more strongly in partnership with students and parents so that they are well informed, and the views of all are listened to.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - There has been considerable change in the governing body, with additional professional expertise brought into the team through new appointments. The governors now receive good information about the work of the school. They make first-hand visits, conduct learning walks with managers, and receive first hand reports from subject leaders. They consequently have better information and greater confidence in hold school leaders fully to account.
  - The governors have a good level of knowledge and understanding of how well the school is doing compared to others nationally. They have had training on the interpretation of data and now ask searching questions in meetings if they have any questions or concerns about student progress.
  - Governors are fully aware of requirements for the management of teachers' performance and pay. They are adamant that future career and pay progression will be linked directly to staff meeting their performance targets. The headteacher's targets are ambitious and demanding.
  - The governors have fully supported leaders and managers in making difficult staffing decisions. They know that they still have changes to make to ensure high quality teaching right across the school.
  - Governors have had good support from the trust, including the co-opting of a very experienced governor from a partner school.

## 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>	138757
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	442653

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<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>	561
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	136
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Governing Body
<b>Chair</b>	Jamie Gordon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Sprague
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01754 610000
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