



# Queen Elizabeth Grammar School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112428  
**LEA** Cumbria  
**Inspection number** 278929  
**Inspection dates** 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Ullswater Road
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Penrith
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		Cumbria CA11 7EG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01768 864621
<b>Number on roll</b>	803	<b>Fax number</b>	01768 890923
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Robert Good
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Christopher Kirkup

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	7 March 2006 - 8 March 2006	278929

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized selective grammar school with a substantial sixth form. Students come from a very extensive rural area. Their social and economic backgrounds are above average overall, and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is low. Many students come from very supportive backgrounds. However, a significant proportion come from low income households. Most students are from white British backgrounds and a very small proportion, from minority ethnic heritages. A few students are in the early stages of learning English. There are no students from families of refugees, asylum seekers or Travellers, nor are there any students with statements of special educational need. The proportion of students identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very low. Based on results in national tests taken in Year 6, students' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is well above average overall.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Students' enthusiasm for learning and the good teaching they receive help them to achieve well and reach consistently high standards. Behaviour is exemplary. Students benefit from an excellent range of enriching activities. The curriculum prepares students well for the next stage of their education. Parents have a high regard for the school and partnerships with the community and primary schools are outstanding. Good leadership and management sustain an ethos of high expectation and standards within a caring community. However, systems to ensure consistently high quality of teaching and to share best practice are not robust enough. Consequently, some lessons lack challenge, pace and variety and students do not always know how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. The school knows where its strengths and weaknesses lie, but some of its evaluations do not take account of inconsistencies in standards and teaching. For example, in 2005, boys did not gain as many A\* or A grades in GCSE in English and German as they did in other subjects. The school has dealt effectively with the few areas identified for improvement at the last inspection and there is a strong capacity to improve. Governors are highly committed and well informed. The school gives good value for money.

not applicable

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good sixth form with many outstanding features. The judgement is the same as the school's own evaluation of its work. Students' achievement and progress are the result of the students' mature approach and the consistently good teaching they receive. Standards in relation to national averages are exceptionally high. Nearly all students complete their courses and are successful, and almost all move on to the universities of their choice; some gain Oxbridge places every year. Students' personal development is outstanding. They set a very good example to younger pupils. Many demonstrate a strong social conscience in practical ways through their service to the school and work in the community. An outstanding curriculum meets individual students' needs and aspirations. Students appreciate the excellent opportunities for enrichment, for example, the Year 13 lecture series. Guidance and support are outstanding and ensure that nearly all students move on to higher education. Good leadership and management maintain high standards and high levels of support. Sixth form leaders have limited responsibility for standards and the quality of provision.

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

- Improve the proportion of boys gaining A\* and A grades at GCSE in English and German.

- Improve teaching further by improving the pace, variety and challenge of lessons and providing more opportunities for students to carry out challenging learning activities for themselves.
- Improve the assessment and marking of students' work so that they all have an accurate understanding of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.
- Put more regular and rigorous systems in place to check the quality of teaching and learning and provide more opportunities to share and develop best practice.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement and standards are good. Students make good progress from well above average starting points and maintain consistently high standards throughout the school. Their achievement is in line with students of similar backgrounds and prior attainment.

Results at GCSE and in national tests in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3 are consistently high. The school meets challenging targets and, in 2005, GCSE results improved significantly. In 2005, a high proportion of students, more girls than boys, gained A\* or A grades. GCSE results showed that boys did not achieve as well in English literature and German as they did in their other subjects, particularly in gaining A\* or A grades.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and their achievement is good. The small number of students who are in the early stages of learning English achieve well.

Achievement and standards in the sixth form are good. Students make good progress from well above average standards at the start of the sixth form and standards in relation to national averages are consistently high. National data provided by the school states that the progress made by students is excellent overall, though in a number of subjects it is satisfactory. Females and males achieve equally well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Students' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. Many benefit from the exceptional range of extra-school activities. Exemplary behaviour and very good relationships ensure trust, consideration and cooperation. Exclusions are infrequent and attendance is above average.

Students develop strong personal values and show empathy for others' misfortune; for example, through choreographing dances based on international tragedies. They develop a healthy respect for other cultures through work in many subjects and visits to many countries. The citizenship programme and the school's ethos contribute to their excellent understanding of moral and social issues. Students develop a strong social conscience. They raise considerable sums for charity and many support community

projects such as recycling and the grandparents' party. The school council offers students opportunities to influence change. Year 7 students appreciate the 'buddy' system run by sixth formers. Students act responsibly in lessons where there are potential hazards. They are well informed about risks associated with alcohol and drug abuse, sex and relationships. Students maintain a healthy lifestyle through high levels of participation in sport and dance and regard for healthy eating. Students are confident, socially aware and attain excellent results. Their future employment prospects are enhanced by involvement in enterprise schemes.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers give clear explanations and provide varied learning activities that challenge most students. Students enjoy lessons where they work in groups, debate issues, take responsibility for learning and are challenged to think more deeply. The better lessons are skilfully planned, imaginative and exciting and include stimulating tasks well matched to students' interests and abilities. Students appreciate knowing how well they are progressing and how to improve their work. As a result they achieve high standards.

A minority of the teaching lacks pace, variety and challenge and does not get the most out of these students. In these lessons, students spend too long listening to teachers and do not do enough for themselves. Teachers do not always match tasks to students' different abilities and, as a result, the most able are not always challenged. Students do not always know how well they can expect to do and what to do to improve. Scrutiny of students' work shows that marking is not always frequent or helpful enough to students.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

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

The school's curriculum is good. It meets the needs and interests of students and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. It provides a good range of subjects at GCSE, AS and A level but the school chooses to provide few vocational opportunities at GCSE and none at A level – a small number of students follow courses at a local college of further education. Numeracy and literacy skills are applied well in subjects and information and communication technology (ICT) is used by students across subjects. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language receive effective support.

Extensive work with primary schools prepares many students well for secondary education. The excellent programme of enrichment activities, an effective citizenship and personal, social and health education programme, enhanced by the school's

considerable external links with the community, all make a valuable contribution to students' personal development.

Sixth form students appreciate outstanding additional opportunities, such as the Year 13 lecture series and many educational visits. The curriculum is planned to meet students' aspirations and includes a wide range of subjects, some provided in partnership with a local school. However, there is no vocational dimension to the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

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

The school offers good care, guidance and support to students. Parents praise arrangements which guide and support students very effectively as they move from Year 6 into Year 7. Procedures for child protection, first aid and safety in school and on visits are robust. Students are well cared for and supported by form tutors and heads of year who know them very well. Vulnerable students, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English are very well supported. Students appreciate the way they are prepared for their futures. They benefit from excellent links with the wider community through work experience and enterprise opportunities. Students find the careers advice very helpful and appreciate the range of visiting speakers.

Underachieving students are identified and targeted for improvement. School systems monitor and record students' progress but this information is not consistently passed on to all students so they are not fully aware of their achievement and what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are good because the leadership team sustain an ethos of high expectation, high standards and good achievement within a well ordered and caring community. The headteacher is strongly focused on the maintenance of high academic standards, provision of a broad range of experiences for students outside the formal curriculum and ensuring the working environment is safe, healthy and conducive to learning. In this, he is ably supported by the senior team.

Leadership is open and consultative with significant trust and delegation accorded to middle managers. This has allowed variable systems to develop in relation to assessment, monitoring of teaching and learning and the sharing of best practice which result in inconsistent procedures. Senior leaders are aware of this and are introducing systems to ensure a more coherent approach. Teachers are very well qualified and most are highly experienced.

Governance is good. Governors are highly committed, well informed and actively involved in the life of the school. Financial management is good and effective prioritisation, for example, for ICT provision, ensures the school provides good value for money. The few issues from the last inspection have been dealt with effectively and there is strong capacity for continued improvement.





## 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>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	2
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	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### 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	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
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	2	

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

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

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8 March 2006

Dear students

On behalf of the inspection team I wish to express our thanks for the welcome we received from you and the staff of your school. We appreciated the opportunity to observe you at work in lessons, talk to you about your school and meet the staff. It is important that we share with you the main findings of the inspection.

Most of you enjoy school and want to do well. You achieve well and reach consistently high standards in your work. Your behaviour is excellent and you are developing a strong social and moral understanding of your own and the wider community. You are prepared to demonstrate your commitment to social issues in many practical ways. You make the most of the excellent range of extra activities that your school works hard to provide for you. The commitment of so many of you to the dance production was impressive. You work hard in lessons and enjoy stimulating lessons and good teaching. You have very good relationships with staff built on trust and respect.

We have asked the school to:

help more boys gain A\* and A grades

give you more opportunities for independent learning in lessons

ensure a good pace to learning and good variety of activities in lessons and to check that this is happening

make sure that you all know, through good marking and assessment, how well you are doing and what you must do to improve

check the quality of teaching regularly and share good practice among staff.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. I hope that you enjoy the rest of your time in school and wish you all well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector