



Sir John Nelthorpe School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118112
LEA North Lincolnshire
Inspection number 280245
Inspection dates 12 January 2006 to 13 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Grammar School Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Brigg
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		North Lincolnshire, DN20 8AA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01652 656551
Number on roll	931	Fax number	01652 658229
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr O'Neal
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Hewlett Parker

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 12 January 2006 - 13 January 2006	Inspection number 280245
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized voluntary controlled school with a small sixth form situated in a small town in north Lincolnshire. The school serves a rural and urban community and learners come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The school deprivation factor is average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low and there are very few pupils whose first language is not English. There is a very small number of pupils from Traveller families. A small number of learners are looked after by persons other than their own families. The pupil population is stable. The proportion of pupils with learning disabilities or disabilities is average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is close to average. Learners' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is broadly average. The school gained specialist school status for science, mathematics and computing in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and attendance is good. The school promotes good personal development. Pupils' achievement, standards and progress are satisfactory. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and some inappropriate courses have led to variations in standards between subjects and in the achievement of higher attaining pupils. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The curriculum increasingly includes more varied courses to meet pupils' needs reflecting the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. Staff know the pupils well and provide good personal support. However, the poor state of the buildings means that there are some health and safety concerns.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher gives clear educational direction. Specialist school status provides a strong impetus for improvement and has helped establish effective partnerships with other schools. Leaders know where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie. However, checks on the effect of the school's work on pupils' achievement and well-being are not systematic or robust enough to ensure consistently good practice or improvement at a good rate. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further. It gives satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

This is a good sixth form. Students achieve well and reach above average standards because teaching is good. A wide choice of subjects is offered to meet individual students' needs through effective partnership with another local school. Students enjoy their work and last year all students completed their courses. A wide range of teaching approaches help students to make good progress and develop independent study skills. Their personal development is good. They make a positive contribution to the school and the community. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the most able pupils reach their full potential and achieve the highest GCSE grades consistently in all subjects.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good through better use of assessment and greater variety, pace and challenge of learning activities.
- Improve the rigour of checks by leaders on actions taken to raise standards, in order to bring about consistently good practice.
- Improve the accommodation so that it provides a safe and positive learning environment that reflects the school's commitment to pupils' achievement and well-being.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress from an average starting point. The 2005 GCSE results were average but were lower than the above average results of 2002–2004. The 2005 results were above average in mathematics, English language, history and business studies because teaching in these subjects is generally good. Weaknesses in teaching, curriculum arrangements and courses not well matched to pupils' needs led to below average results in a number of other subjects. Results in Year 9 tests in English, mathematics and science are consistently above average. The school just failed to meet challenging targets for national assessments in Year 9 and in Year 11.

There is no significant underachievement among any group of pupils. Girls gain better GCSE results than boys, matching the national picture. Higher attaining pupils achieve well in English literature, science, history, business studies and design and technology, except systems and control. However, in some subjects not enough higher attaining pupils gain the highest grades. Poor attendance negatively affects the achievement of a small number of older pupils and some pupils from Traveller families. Pupils with learning difficulties and 'looked after' children are well supported and achieve satisfactorily.

Standards in the sixth form are above average and students' achievement and progress are good. In 2004 and 2005, AS and A-level results were above average. A slight dip in 2005 is in line with students' prior attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. In almost all lessons, pupils behaved well and showed positive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, constant chatter was not checked and slowed down learning. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average, except for a small number of older pupils and a few pupils from Traveller backgrounds. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall. Although pupils' spiritual awareness is developed through religious education, it is limited by the lack of regular worship and reflection. Most pupils are courteous to adults and to one another and the school is an orderly community. Pupils take on responsibility seriously, serving on the school council and fundraising for many charities. A well planned personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to know how to keep safe. Pupils are mostly free from intimidation and they know who to turn to for help if they need it. The school offers good opportunities to stay healthy through regular participation in physical education and good healthy eating options. There is, however, little encouragement to drink water regularly. Pupils are well prepared for their futures, developing good personal qualities and basic skills.

Personal development in the sixth form is good. Students develop good study skills and learn how to work independently. Students are good role models for younger pupils. They raise money for charity and act as mentors for pupils in Year 11.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good and outstanding lessons are characterised by teachers' secure subject knowledge, high expectations of progress, rapid pace, challenge for all pupils, and good relationships. However, in some subjects, marking and teachers' feedback does not make it clear to pupils how well they are doing in relation to their personal targets, and pupils do not always understand what they must do to improve. Some lessons lack pace or challenge and the range of learning activities is narrow. Occasionally, in an inadequate lesson, progress is slow. It deteriorates because pupils' continual chatter and lack of attention are not checked. The school is taking many steps to improve teaching and learning. However, inconsistencies remain because checks made by senior and middle leaders on the effectiveness of action taken are not systematic or robust enough.

Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good. Teachers' good level of expertise helps them to provide challenging learning activities that succeed in developing students' depth of understanding and independent learning skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting the needs of most pupils. Specialist status has improved the provision of more relevant courses in science and information and communication technology (ICT); the latter is provided for all pupils in response to the growing need in the local area for computer literate workers. Preparation for employment is further helped by a well planned programme of careers education and a work experience placement for pupils in Year 11. However, the contribution of subjects across the curriculum to work related learning is not yet properly coordinated. The school recognises the need to extend the limited range of vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form as an alternative to the traditional academic curriculum. However, this is hindered by restricted on-site accommodation and the cost of transport to local colleges. A good range of extra curricular activities contributes to pupils' enjoyment and achievement and to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The poor state of repair and maintenance of much of the accommodation raises some health and safety concerns. Otherwise, the school provides a caring and supportive environment. Policies are in place to safeguard pupils and students. Guidance on options and careers helps learners to make well informed decisions about their futures. Learners appreciate the way the school helps them to move on to each new stage of their education and the individual support they receive. The school works hard to improve the poor attendance of a small minority of pupils by using the appropriate support agencies. Nearly all sixth form students acquire a place at their first choice of university. Pupils' progress is tracked closely, underachieving pupils are supported and those exceeding expectations are rewarded. However, pupils are not always informed of their target levels and grades, thereby reducing their value in helping pupils to improve. A recent parental survey indicated satisfaction with the school but some concerns about accommodation and facilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, provides clear educational direction. The school is committed to equality of opportunity. Senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses and parents' and learners' views are taken into account. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Improvements are evident, for example in science and ICT. Above average GCSE results were maintained until 2005 when they dipped. The school knows why this happened and is tackling the reasons for it. The school has the capacity to improve and specialist school status is providing impetus for change and improvement at an increasing rate. However, checks on the work of the school by senior and middle leaders are not yet systematic or rigorous enough to bring about improvement at a good rate or consistently good practice in all areas. Governors know the school well and hold leaders closely to account. Except for the provision of a daily collective act of worship, the governing body fulfils its statutory duties. Staffing and resources meet the needs of the curriculum. However, much of the accommodation does not provide a positive learning environment. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The sixth form is well led and managed. High expectations are established of staff and students. Close checks on students' progress ensure that they receive good support. The joint provision is well coordinated and ensures a good breadth of courses is offered.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	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	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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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14 January 2006

Dear pupils and students

Thank you for the friendly and courteous welcome you gave us when we visited your school. It was a great pleasure to meet so many of you and talk to you about your school. We appreciated the opportunity to see you at work and to talk to your teachers.

It is important that you know what we think about your school. Many of you told us that you enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure there. The attendance rates are good. You behave well and in nearly all the lessons we saw you had a good attitude to learning. Sixth form students are developing good independent learning skills and do well in their examinations.

Many of you do well in your GCSE examinations but not in every subject. Some of you are capable of getting the very highest grades but you don't always achieve this. Your school knows the reasons for this and is working hard to make improvements that will help you. The recently gained status as a specialist school for science, mathematics and computing is helping your school to improve more rapidly, for example, by improving the range of courses you can take from the age of 14 so that that they better match your interests and needs.

In order to help you to do your best we have asked your school to:

make all lessons and learning activities challenging and interesting

make sure that you know how well you are doing in relation to your targets and exactly what you need to work on to improve in all subjects

carry out regular checks on all its work to make sure that improvements take place and that they help you all to achieve well

improve the buildings because many parts are in a poor state.

You can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector