



Caistor Grammar School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120702
LEA LINCOLNSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280874
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. David Anstead LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Church Street
School category	Foundation		LN7 6QJ
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01472851250
Number on roll	628	Fax number	01472852248
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Russell Orr
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Roger Hale

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Caistor Grammar School is a selective school taking some of the most able students from its immediate community and the wider area. This is the second year of its specialist sports status. There are 628 students on roll of whom 155 are in the sixth form. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups, students receiving free school meals and students who have special educational needs are all much lower than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school judges its effectiveness as good. Inspectors judge it to be outstanding. This is because the overall achievement of students is outstanding and standards are high. Outstanding support and guidance for students underpin the overall excellence of students' personal development. Students are rightly proud of their school and this is seen in the way in which they welcome visitors and take great pride in telling them how much they enjoy being at the school. The high quality leadership and governance of the school has led to outstanding progress in dealing with the key issues for action identified at the time of the previous inspection. The provision for physical education (PE) and sports is now outstanding as a result of the school's specialist status, which is having an increasingly positive impact on standards. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now good and the accommodation for music satisfactory. The capacity to improve further is excellent. The school provides excellent value for money. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning across the school is consistently good, it is only outstanding in a few departments. The school recognises it needs to develop a consistent whole-school approach to the use of assessment information.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Inspectors judge the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form to be outstanding. This is higher than the school's own evaluation of it being good. Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. Students are provided with a good range of courses that are well suited to their needs and aspirations. As a result, virtually all students complete their courses and are well prepared for their future studies and employment. Within a carefully structured learning environment, students benefit from consistently good teaching and excellent care and support. Students' progress is carefully monitored and prompt action is taken to provide additional support where necessary. This makes a significant contribution to the outstanding progress that students make and the high standards that are achieved. Many students take leading roles in the numerous school, house and community activities and participation rates in the excellent range of enrichment activities are high. This makes a significant contribution to their personal development, which is outstanding. Through their positive attitudes and commitment to the well-being of others, sixth form students provide excellent role models for younger students and are outstanding ambassadors for the school. The sixth form provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure further improvement in the quality of teaching and learning by more systematic sharing of the outstanding practice existing in some departments. - Extend the good work being piloted within the school in order to ensure a more consistent whole school approach to the use of assessment information.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The attainment of students joining the school in Year 7 is well above average. Students make excellent progress during Key Stage 3 and do even better during Key Stage 4. By the end of Year 11, students have made outstanding progress and achieve higher standards than their prior attainment would predict. The proportion of students achieving the highest A* and A grades at GCSE are well above average. For example, in the 2005 results, the proportion of A* and A grades in English Language and Literature respectively were 85% and 71%. Those students staying on into the sixth form make excellent progress. By the end of Year 13, on average, students achieve half a grade more in every A level they take than would be expected by their earlier performance at GCSE. Achievement and standards overall are outstanding. The school sets detailed and challenging performance targets. It is not complacent about its success. There is improvement year on year resulting in continually rising standards. There is no underachievement amongst particular groups of students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding and make a significant contribution to standards and achievement. Students thoroughly enjoy coming to school and as a result attendance is well above average. The overwhelming majority of students are exceptionally well behaved, very mature and self-disciplined. They have a real thirst for learning, willingly conform to the high expectations of their teachers and respond with real pleasure when activities are exciting and challenging. Students are socially very adept, and are keen to engage in conversation, to share their ideas, and to give their opinions. Students of all ages have a very well developed sense of right and wrong, and a very firm understanding of the impact of their actions on the well-being and happiness of others. Students benefit from the strong community spirit that permeates the school and this, together with the many opportunities provided for reflection, supports students' spiritual development. They demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the needs of others and transfer these feelings into actions, as shown in the many charitable activities. Students have a good understanding of the customs and traditions of others and show high levels of respect and tolerance to others. The school ensures that students have a clear understanding of how to be safe. Students also have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles because they have excellent opportunities to participate in sport and because the school provides healthy eating menus conscientiously. Through the admirable school council, class representatives of all ages contribute their ideas to improve the school environment with confidence. Because of their academic success and willingness to take responsibility, students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and future employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's own assessment that the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some outstanding features. This is reflected in the excellent progress students make, and the very high standards they attain. Learning is supported very well by the productive quality of working relationships throughout the school. The personal subject knowledge of teachers is very good; often outstanding. Consequently, pupils have respect for their teachers because they know they have much to offer them. This creates an atmosphere for learning where students can thrive. All teaching observed was good or better. In the very best teaching, students are highly challenged, particularly through the expert use of questioning. There are stimulating tasks and discussions, for example in an outstanding English lesson on Steinbeck's use of character in 'Of Mice and Men'. The majority of students have highly developed critical, analytical and literacy skills. However, not all teachers take full enough advantage of this to stimulate discussion sufficiently in lessons. There is an inconsistent approach across the school to the involvement of students in the discussion of learning intentions at the start of lessons and in a review of learning at the end of lessons. This is because not all teachers have developed fully the strategies necessary to involve students consistently enough in the exploration of their learning through all elements of a lesson. Nevertheless, the development of students' independent learning skills is often highly developed, particularly in the sixth form. The use of assessment in lessons, and thorough marking, to guide students and help them know how to improve further is effective. However, there is, as yet, no consistent approach to the use of assessment data across the school. Nevertheless, the school is currently working on this as part of its improvement planning. The exploration of common approaches, at whole school and departmental levels, is offering exciting possibilities aimed at raising the quality of teaching and learning even further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is outstanding in the main school and good in the sixth form. It covers the full range of required subjects and additional opportunities which helps students to make excellent academic and personal progress. In response to the needs and interests of students, the school is currently considering offering an 'A' level course in business studies and has also expanded its ICT provision in Years 7 to 11. Curriculum choices, such as biology, chemistry, physics and Latin in Year 10, have provided students with further choices and opportunities. There is a well-organised programme of careers education and work experience which prepares students well for their future economic well-being. The curriculum is complemented by an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. Students of all ages take advantage of the opportunities for sports, visits

and residential trips. The inter-house cultural activities, which include drama and musical productions, are a significant strength of the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The overall quality of care, support and guidance for students throughout the school is outstanding. This provision underpins securely the high quality of students' personal development and academic progress. Students told inspectors they feel very safe and secure within the school community. Inspectors agree with the students' views. This is because students are very well cared for by a dedicated and approachable staff. Students are very willing to take responsibility for their mutual care, and do not abuse the trust the school places in them. They feel able to talk with teachers and other adults within the school about any concerns, whether academic or pastoral. Furthermore, staff are sensitive to the students' needs because they know them well. Consequently, when necessary, very effective support systems can be brought into play very quickly. Assessment systems are good, and the school is actively working to develop these further. Furthermore, the guidance given to enable students to choose courses as they progress through the phases of their education, is informative and of a high order. Child protection procedures are fully in place. Arrangements for pupils with identified learning or physical disabilities are good. Staff specifically involved with students who have a special educational need are working together effectively to ensure any necessary support is provided. The school works very well with parents and partner support agencies to ensure pupils are enabled to strive to do their best and achieve to the best of their abilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headmaster and the governors work extremely well together in setting the direction of the school. The headmaster, well supported by an effective senior management team, provides the drive and dynamism to move the school forward. This is seen in the achievement of sports college specialist status. They have established an excellent climate for learning and set high expectations for both staff and students. The school runs extremely well on a day to day basis despite the constraints of the accommodation. The school knows its strengths and has identified the right areas for improvement. Long established systems for gathering the views of parents and students are used effectively to respond to the needs they identify. Whilst the school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate, in some areas inspectors judged the provision to be better than that indicated by the school. Monitoring of teaching and learning is good but should be more rigorous. There are a wealth of effective partnerships with other schools and organisations across the region. The school and its leadership have a deservedly high reputation amongst parents and the community.

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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?	1	1
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

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	1	1

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	1
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
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; 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	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
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

Following our visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you about our findings. I would like to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us and for your invariably courteous, thoughtful and helpful responses to our questions. The quality of education you receive at your school is excellent. This is because your teachers expect you to work hard; you are very well motivated yourselves, you are well taught in all subjects and because your headmaster leads the school extremely well. You are working at the highest levels in your lessons and your teachers use their subject knowledge well to engage, extend and stretch you. We were impressed by the very high quality of discussions we observed in some lessons. The range of activities, clubs and special theme days the school provides for you is excellent and you told us how much you enjoy participating in those. Most of all the school helps you become able to work well independently, self confident, articulate and responsible. The school is a warm and caring community. You have a strong sense of right and wrong and are sensitive to the feelings of others. The younger students amongst you told us how much they value the support and help of sixth formers. However, we think your school can be even better still. In the very best lessons we saw, the teachers made the learning so interesting that there was a real sense of excitement amongst students. In others we saw assessment information being used well to pinpoint how individuals could improve. We have asked your headmaster to ensure this good practice is shared amongst all teachers. We were very pleased to see you making the most of the excellent opportunities the school is providing for you. I wish you every continued success in the future.