



# Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Horncastle

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 120707  
**LEA** LINCOLNSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 280877  
**Inspection dates** 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. David Martin LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	West Street
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		LN9 5AD
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01507 522465
<b>Number on roll</b>	828	<b>Fax number</b>	01507 527711
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs.Margaret Sergeant
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Tim Peacock

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 22 March 2006 - 23 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280877
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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

The school is a mixed selective school of just under average size that serves a wide rural catchment area. It has joint specialist college status in science and mathematics with the 11 to 16 school in the town. This has enabled a wide range of partnerships with other schools, including feeder schools, and the business and wider communities. The number of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is very low, as is the proportion eligible for free school meals. Most students are from White British backgrounds, and a small proportion have other ethnic heritage.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School is a good school with outstanding features. This confirms the school's own view of its effectiveness. There is a commitment to continuous improvement that is effectively balanced with an appreciation of the tradition and ethos that makes the school so well regarded by the whole community. Particular strengths include: the innovative partnership working forged through joint specialist status; consistently high standards maintained over time; the excellent relationships, care and mutual support between members of the school community. The standards attained are well above national averages throughout the school. Students make good progress in the main school from an already high starting point. The progress made by sixth form students is outstanding. All groups of learners make equally good progress. The personal development of students is outstanding. Attendance and behaviour are excellent. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. They have outstanding opportunities for enrichment activities beyond the normal school day and excellent opportunities to contribute to the community and gain workplace skills. This results in mature, reflective and well rounded young people who are well prepared for adult life. Recent developments in academic and personal support systems have enabled students to have an increasing knowledge of how well they are progressing. Teaching is good overall, but is inconsistent across and within subjects. Developments in the monitoring of teaching and the sharing of good practice are already having an impact on learning. The academic curriculum suits the needs of students very well. However, statutory requirements are not fully met for citizenship in the main school and religious education in the sixth form. The headteacher is highly regarded and has built an effective senior management team. Subject and pastoral leaders are starting to take more initiative, but need to focus on making teaching more consistent. Financial management is robust and the school provides good value for money. Governors are supportive and are effective critical friends. The school's self-evaluation generally matches the findings of this inspection. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve even further.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are outstanding, although the school judged them to be good. The number of students staying on into the sixth form is high, as is the retention rate within the sixth form. High standards have been maintained over recent years in comparison with national averages, and students' progress is outstanding. Most students achieve above the level predicted by their previous levels of attainment. The target setting process and the monitoring of progress are good and a new system of individual learning plans is being embedded. Teaching in the sixth form is good and often outstanding. Although the academic curriculum is limited to AS and A-level courses, the number of courses on offer gives a breadth that is suitable for the students. There is also a broad range of additional opportunities which enriches

the curriculum. Students enjoy their studies and are appreciative of the support given to them by the staff. Religious education is being planned but currently the school does not fully meet the statutory requirement in this area. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good with the new structure still being embedded. The school has a good understanding of the strengths of the sixth form and what is needed to bring about further improvement.

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

- Fully meet statutory requirements for the delivery of citizenship in the main school and religious education in the sixth form. - Improve the consistency of learning and teaching through the sharing of established and developing good practice. - Further develop the role of subject and pastoral leaders in monitoring and improving the quality and consistency of classroom practice.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

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

The overall achievement of students is good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. Measured against national averages, standards are exceptionally high in both the main school and the sixth form. Students enter the school with attainment above the national average, make good progress and reach standards that are very high in comparison with averages by the end of Year 11. Students enter the sixth form with standards that are well above average and make outstanding progress. The number obtaining the higher grades in advanced level examinations is very high and virtually all students obtain grades A to E. The school enables all groups of students to be successful, and the proportion achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C is well above the national average. This has been consistently so for a number of years. Students take a higher number of subjects than is normally found, covering a wide range of areas. Students with learning difficulties progress as well as other students. In the main school there is some variation in performance across the core subjects. Achievement in English is lower than that in mathematics and science at the end of Years 9 and 11, although the gap is narrowing. In other subjects there is no significant, consistent difference in the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A\*-C. Students generally meet challenging targets that are set on the basis of predictions from a range of indicators. The school is constantly striving for further improvement.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development and well-being are judged to be outstanding rather than good, as in the school self-evaluation. Students are proud of the school and keen to take part in the wide range of activities offered. The school is a very orderly community where students' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Students speak enthusiastically about the numerous and varied opportunities they have to develop important skills

for adult life. The level of attendance is outstanding, because students enjoy school and want to learn. Students understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and this is confirmed by their participation in sports and their healthy eating. During lessons students are well motivated and interested. They concentrate well and contribute confidently and thoughtfully to discussions. Students develop a strong sense of responsibility within the school's inclusive environment, where they feel safe and their achievements are valued. The school council provides students with an active voice in the school and they are confident that their views are important in the school's development. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. During many lessons, such as English literature, students reflect on a broad range of issues which impact on themselves and the lives of others. Students respond well to the school's positive ethos which helps them to understand human feelings and emotions and to respect and appreciate different viewpoints. They are very committed towards the support of a wide range of local and national charities. Students learn to respect and appreciate the richness of a multicultural society through visitors and regular visits, including residential trips abroad and involvement in World Challenge.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall, but inconsistent across and within subjects. Many lessons have outstanding features. In the best lessons, where teachers cater for students' individual capabilities well, challenge and expectations are high, no opportunities to extend students' learning are missed, and students respond eagerly and enthusiastically. They become increasingly confident and develop high levels of thinking skills. In less effective lessons, when the pace is too slow, objectives are not clear and students are not sufficiently involved in activities, students lose their sense of purpose and their rate of learning decreases. Nevertheless, they almost invariably behave well. Information about students' prior attainment is well known but is not yet used consistently to ensure that lessons are planned to meet the different needs of individual students. Work is generally well marked, with feedback to inform students whether or not they are meeting challenging but realistic attainment targets. Recent national strategies underpin planning in most lessons, although time for consolidating new learning is often too short. Although students' literacy skills are high, the quality of their writing varies from one subject to another.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Both in the main school and in the sixth form the curriculum is good, although statutory requirements are not fully met for citizenship in the main school or for religious education in the sixth form. Reflecting the school's status as a science college, students in Years 8 and 9 take three separate science subjects. They study two foreign languages, and both boys and girls take part in dance and rugby. In Years 10 and 11 most students

study a minimum of ten GCSE courses, choosing from a wide range of options, including five specialist technology subjects, Spanish, theatre arts, media studies and business studies. The provision for gifted and talented students is very good, as is the support for students of lower ability and for those who are at risk of underachieving. All Year 10 students have an extended period of work experience. Large numbers of students become involved in a variety of extracurricular activities at lunchtime or after school. Visits to places of interest, exchanges with schools in France, Germany and The Czech Republic, and other foreign trips further enrich students' experience.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The overall quality of care, support and guidance is good. Students receive excellent pastoral care from a committed staff who know them very well. The school has good emerging support systems and the ethos for learning is strong. The school follows effective procedures to identify students who may be at risk of underachievement or disaffection and good support mechanisms are in place. However, systems to support students with learning difficulties during lessons still need to be fully embedded, particularly in lesson planning. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are robust and the school follows good procedures for the protection of children and the monitoring of health and safety issues. Students have confidence in their teachers and relationships are excellent. Although the school works closely with the Connexions service, opportunities for careers guidance through personal and social education are limited.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides highly effective leadership. His vision for the future development of the school combines a respect for tradition with an understanding of the need for continuous improvement. He is supported by an able senior management team, who have roles that are well matched to the priorities of the school. The quality of self-evaluation is good and includes consultation with parents. The school development plan is based increasingly on self-evaluation findings. There is a three year plan and a detailed annual plan, with clear objectives, lines of accountability and sound financial planning. Relationships with neighbouring schools and business links, enabled through partnership specialist status, are a particular strength. Subject leaders have recently been involved in a 'leading from the middle' initiative that has led to significant improvements in the use of assessment for learning in the classroom. This is a promising development, although not yet consistently applied across all subject areas. The further development of subject leaders is identified as a priority. Heads of year have quickly become effective in supporting the personal and academic progress of students. The school is well staffed with specialist teachers, although it has a high proportion of part-time staff. Support staff play an increasingly important role in the school. Financial management and control are very good. Accommodation, although adequate, is not always ideal,

particularly for the sixth form. The governors have an effective committee structure. They are well informed, are highly supportive and act as critical friends to the senior management team.



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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>	<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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	1
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	1
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	1	
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	1	

### 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	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<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	2	
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	1	
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	insufficient evidence

<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**

You will remember that we inspected your school recently. I am now writing to tell you what we found. Before I do, I would like to thank you, on behalf of the whole team, for your contribution to the process. We were greatly impressed by your maturity, positive attitudes and courtesy. You openly and honestly shared your own views about the school in classrooms, discussions and around the school. You told us that you attend a good school and that some aspects of school life are outstanding, and we agree. Particular strengths include: - the way in which specialist college status has enabled the school to work effectively with others to broaden the excellent opportunities available to you - the very high standards maintained throughout the school, partly due to your own excellent attitudes to learning - the support, care and positive attitudes that make relationships between all members of your school community outstandingly good. We believe that your school, although very effective and highly regarded by the community, could improve a few things even further. Parts of the curriculum need greater emphasis, particularly citizenship in the main school and religious education in the sixth form. You clearly enjoy and respond enthusiastically to the very best teaching and learning approaches seen in the most effective lessons that we observed. This practice should be shared more widely across the school. We have asked the headteacher to work with subject leaders to ensure that this good practice is shared across all subject areas and amongst all teachers. In conclusion, you and your parents are justly proud of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School. Everyone involved with your school gives a great deal of time and effort to making sure that you achieve your potential and have many exciting opportunities to prepare you for later life. Teachers and other staff, governors and the many people involved with the school are all committed to maintaining the traditions of the school whilst continuing to improve it even further. You are a great credit to your school and, as your headteacher says, its greatest asset! I wish you and the school every success in the future.