



Spalding High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120642
LEA LINCOLNSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 291812
Inspection dates 27 June 2006 to 27 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Martin Cragg HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	Stonegate
School category	Community		PE11 2PJ
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	01775722110
Number on roll	948	Fax number	01775762531
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Elizabeth Alexander
Date of previous inspection	4 February 2002	Headteacher	Mr. Tim Clark

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	27 June 2006 - 27 June 2006	291812

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector met with a range of staff and pupils and considered evidence provided by the school. A number of lessons were observed, some with a member of the school's senior team. Discussions with the chair of governors and 150 questionnaire responses from parents further assisted the writing of this report.

Description of the school

Spalding High School is an 11 - 18 girls' grammar school of average size, with boys admitted to the sixth form, serving the town of Spalding and surrounding area. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, with learning difficulties and disabilities, and statements of special educational needs are low. There are relatively few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or with English as an additional language. The school has had specialist sports status since 2003. Pupils enter the school with attainment which is well above the average but there is a wider range of ability than is the case in many grammar schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents praised the work of the school in their responses to the questionnaire. 'Spalding High School is a shining example of what a school should be' where 'staff are very approachable' and show pupils 'kindness, care and encouragement'. Spalding High School provides good education with many outstanding features. Pupils achieve consistently high standards throughout the school. In 2005, half of all GCSE entries were graded A* or A, and 60% of all A level entries were awarded grades A and B. Pupils make at least good and often very good progress. The level of university entrance is high. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and attendance is very good. They appreciate the time and attention provided by staff and the outstanding guidance and support which they receive. Pupils are confident and behave in an exemplary way in lessons and around the school, thriving on the responsibility given to them. In particular, sixth formers contribute strongly to the lower school through peer mentor, form prefect and 'buddy' schemes and through the House system. The school councils have made many effective suggestions for improvement in healthy eating, study time and curriculum choice upon which the school has acted. Increasingly large numbers of pupils participate enthusiastically in the wide range of additional activities and events. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are generally challenging and conducted with good pace. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong and there is a very constructive working atmosphere. However, teachers do not always plan in enough detail for the range of abilities and differing rates of pupils' progress in classes. Pupils appreciate regular assessment of their work and the tracking of their progress, but advice on how to improve further is not yet provided consistently. The curriculum offers a good range of choice with Latin and a second modern foreign language available before Year 9. Pupils have a wide range of GCSE courses from which to choose, and there is very good flexibility which allows them to benefit from more combinations than might usually be found. Sixth formers also benefit from increasingly wide choices, with politics and law recently introduced. Specialist sports status has had good impact on the breadth of curriculum and levels of participation. The range of additional activities and events provided is very good and pupils' suggestions are taken into account to broaden opportunities further. The school rightly prides itself on the outstanding care, guidance and support it provides. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that their child was safe, well cared for and making good progress. Pupils identified the friendly, welcoming and supportive approach of teachers as a major strength of the school which contributed to their high attainment. They felt strongly that relationships in the school were very good and that there was always someone to talk to about problems. Pupils are very confident that bullying will be dealt with effectively and appreciate the programme of specialist education on healthy and safe lifestyles, particularly when involving outside speakers. The quality of identification and planning for pupils with particular needs is excellent. External agencies such as the school nurse and other health professionals provide very good support. The headteacher and senior staff provide a very clear vision for the development of the school which builds on established strengths but also accurately identifies areas for improvement. They set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and

achievement which are shared by staff and governors. The school rightly prides itself on its commitment to success for all its pupils. The school has improved its systems for monitoring its performance and evaluating its progress. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation except for its overall judgement of the sixth form and the progress made by sixth form students. Leadership of subject teams is generally good but there remain inconsistencies in approaches to monitoring and evaluation which require further action to ensure that the best practice is shared. Governors are committed to the success of the school and increasingly hold it to account, showing a very good understanding of the key areas for improvement. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement, especially in the tracking of pupils' progress and in the setting of targets for sixth formers. This improvement, the use of a recent external review of leadership and management, and the continuing rise in standards across the school indicate good capacity to improve further. The school provides very good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school judged the sixth form to be outstanding but inspectors judge it to be good with some outstanding features. Students achieve consistently high standards and make progress which is at least good and often very good. Students receive excellent guidance and support and their personal development is outstanding. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are judged by the school to be good and inspectors agree. The sixth form is well led and continues to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Years 9 and 11, pupils achieve standards that are exceptionally and consistently high with almost all achieving at least 5 higher GCSE grades in 2005. Pupils make very good progress by the end of Year 9 and at least good progress by the end of Year 11, generally achieving the challenging targets set for them. Pupils with specific needs make good progress as a result of excellent support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have very positive attitudes in lessons and their behaviour is exemplary. They participate enthusiastically in the wide range of sporting, cultural and other activities available to them and in the various House competitions. They show considerable effort and initiative in fundraising for charities. Pupils develop effective skills for their future careers through work experience in year 10. Older pupils set very good examples for the rest of the school and make strong contributions through the various responsibilities which they undertake.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have very good rapport with pupils and set high expectations. They plan thoroughly and lessons are usually challenging, although sometimes tasks are too hard for some and do not extend others enough. Pupils are encouraged to be active in their learning and their progress in lessons is increasingly being assessed effectively. Teachers mark work regularly and pupils appreciate advice on how to improve their work further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and provides an increasing range of choice as pupils get older, catering for the needs of most pupils effectively. In Years 10 and 11, pupils benefit from a good range of courses which can be combined flexibly. There is an impressive range of additional activities, many introduced as part of the school's specialist sports status; since becoming a Sports College the number of students participating in sporting activities has more than doubled.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding throughout the school. Excellent guidance is provided on choice of GCSE courses, preparation for sixth form and higher education. Very good induction programmes, using sixth form 'buddies', exist for new Year 7 pupils. All the required policies for ensuring pupils' protection are in place and those pupils with specific needs are given excellent support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The senior team set high expectations which are shared by staff and governors. There are increasingly effective systems for evaluating the school's performance and recent external review has been used very effectively to identify key areas for improvement. There is a good team approach to pastoral work but approaches to the leadership of subjects vary too much at present. The school has a strong commitment to success for all its pupils.

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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?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
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?	2	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	
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	2	

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?	2	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?	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	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

As you will know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. However, first I would like to thank you for your co-operation during my visit. I enjoyed meeting some of you and appreciated your considered comment and opinions. The inspection found that yours is a good school with many outstanding features. You achieve consistently high standards in examinations and most of you make at least good progress from when you join the school. Your attendance, attitude to lessons and behaviour are exemplary. You appreciate the very good guidance and support provided by your teachers and the help they give you with your work. I agreed with the school that the teaching you receive is generally good, particularly when you are encouraged to learn by doing or through discussion. You have a good range of courses to choose from at GCSE and in the sixth form. You also benefit from a very good range of activities and events which large numbers of you participate in with enthusiasm. The contribution made by peer mentors, form prefects, council members, House officers and others who take on responsibilities is impressive. Your tutors and other pastoral staff provide very good support for you and, increasingly, your progress is monitored closely. Relationships in the school are excellent. There are some areas where the school recognises that it needs to continue to develop. In lessons, sometimes the work is very hard for some of you and not challenging enough for others. You told me that you appreciate teachers giving you clear advice on how to improve your work but that this does not yet happen consistently in all subjects. I also encouraged senior staff to share the good practice of some subject leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and progress in their area to achieve greater consistency. I am sure that your school will continue to improve. I wish you well in the future.