

Carre's Grammar School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120699
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	291836
Inspection date	28 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School	703
6th form	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Lupton
Headteacher	Mr Nick Law
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2002
School address	Northgate Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 7DD
Telephone number	01529 302181
Fax number	01529 413488

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the effectiveness of the sixth form. The inspector looked particularly at the progress made by students during the current academic year, the impact of leadership and management on teaching, learning, the curriculum and standards and the school's capacity to improve. The inspector examined the impact of specialist sports college status on the curriculum and also students' personal development and well-being. The impact of the school's arrangements for care, guidance and support on students' personal development was also investigated. The inspector met staff, students, governors and a local primary school deputy headteacher. Parts of lessons were observed, students' work and school documentation, including self-evaluation were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Carre's is an average size selective boy's grammar school catering for students from the locality in Years 7 to 13, and is one of the three providers within the comprehensive Sleaford Joint Sixth Form (JSF). The majority of students are of White British background and a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no students learning English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below average as is the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs, which include dyslexia and other literacy-related difficulties. There are no students looked after by the local authority, and 117 students are identified as Gifted and Talented. Students enter the school with well above average attainment. A new headteacher has been in post since January 2008. The school is a Specialist Sports College and has operated a shared use sports hall with North Kesteven District Council since September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Carre's Grammar School provides a good education and high quality care for its students. Most parents are very supportive of the school. They accurately describe the very good ethos where respect for others, and the high standards expected of students are central to the school's work. Good leadership and management have led to good improvement since the last inspection, good teaching and learning and a good curriculum, both within the school and the sixth form. As a result, the achievement of students throughout the school is good and standards are consistently well above the national average. Students' personal development is outstanding because provision for care, guidance and support is also outstanding. Parents praised the very dedicated and enthusiastic staff who put boys' interests first, and described the special needs support as 'nothing less than superb'.

The achievement of students at Key Stage 3 and students who find learning more difficult is outstanding. The 2007 national test results show that students at Key Stage 3 made outstanding progress and are currently on course to meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them this year. Students in Key Stage 4 make good progress. Although students achieved well above average results at GCSE in 2007, results in mathematics were not as good as English or science. The strategies introduced by the subject leader to improve the quality of teaching and the mathematics curriculum have had an excellent impact at Key Stage 3 but have not yet had a full impact Key Stage 4. However, this situation is clearly improving as students are currently on course to improve their mathematics results significantly this year. The proportion of students gaining the higher A* and A grades is lower than might be expected. The school is aware that some students are taking more GCSE courses than their capabilities warrant, and is taking the necessary steps to reduce the number of courses for those students who might benefit from this.

Students' achievement is good because teaching is good throughout the school. The key strengths of teaching include good subject knowledge and high expectations for learning so students focus on their work and acquire new knowledge and skills effectively. Lessons are nearly always brisk and lively and teachers make good use of resources including information and communication technology to support teaching and learning, although the use of interactive whiteboards is not yet fully developed. Teachers maintain excellent relationships with students who show great respect, listen to teachers attentively and follow instructions carefully in lessons. Teachers also make good use of assessment and usually involve students in their own assessment. Marking of students' work is also usually good. Teachers make sure they inform students how well they are doing and most have a clear idea of the National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades they are likely to achieve and how they can improve on these.

The curriculum provides a good range of examination courses for students and is relevant to most students' needs. The school is reviewing its curriculum and taking the necessary steps to ensure that students are taking the right number of subjects according to their individual needs. A good range of visits and visitors to the school enriches students' learning. Students' personal development, especially their achievement and enjoyment are considerably enhanced by the outstanding impact of Sports College status. For example, nearly all students who entered for GCSE in PE in 2007 gained A* to C grades with 55 per cent gaining A* or A grades. In the sixth form, 45 per cent of students gained A or B grades at A level. All students have excellent opportunities to develop sports leadership skills and many older students work as community sports leaders in local schools, showing outstanding personal development. A primary deputy

headteacher described the outstanding contribution that sports leaders from Carre's make to the personal development, and enjoyment of Year 6 pupils in her school. The school also advises other schools regionally and nationally through the Youth Sports Trust and British Council 'Dreams and Teams Programme. It provides an excellent facility within the community where patients suffering from cardiac problems are referred to the school's fitness centre by local doctors for a 12-week programme of therapy. Sports College status has resulted in excellent opportunities for enriching learning through the wide range of sporting clubs available to students. Through the Youth Trust and British Council 'Dreams and Teams' programme, the school is linked to a school in Senegal where Carre's students and those from Senegal develop skills as Young Leaders. Students have visited Senegal and this has considerably enhanced their appreciation of the diversity of other cultures. Good provision for work related learning includes discrete enterprise days which considerably enhance students' economic well being.

Students' outstanding personal development is seen in their very high levels of maturity, their good attendance and behaviour, and their extremely positive attitudes to learning. All students want to work hard and do their best; they show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning in lessons, and are keen to help others. Students confirm that there is very little bullying in the school, and say that on the very rare occasions it occurs, it is handled extremely well by staff. As a result, students feel very safe and say they would go to anyone if they needed help. Students thoroughly enjoy school which is reflected in the high take up of after school and lunch time clubs. They stay very fit and healthy through the excellent opportunities for exercise and participation in sports and also by making healthy choices at meal times. The proactive school council has had a very positive impact on the school, through for example, interviewing the recently appointed headteacher.

Outstanding care guidance and support is seen in the very high expectations staff have for students taking responsibility in the school, the excellent work of learning mentors, who ensure all students who find difficulty with learning make at least good progress, and the rigorous systems for assessing risks to students and safeguarding their welfare and interests. Academic guidance has improve significantly since the last inspection and is now good because all students are given challenging targets and make good progress in learning.

Leadership and management are good and the new headteacher has made an excellent start in strengthening the senior management team and providing sharper links between its accurate self evaluation and school development plan priorities. All staff have a shared drive for improvement and the monitoring of teaching and learning at all levels is effective. Governance is good because governors now have effective strategic oversight of the school's work through, for example, their joint evaluation of the work of departments with heads of faculty. Links with local schools and the community are outstanding and links with parents are good. Although a significant minority of parents, in their questionnaires, highlighted a shortfall in communication between school and home, the school is already addressing this effectively by, for example, making parents more aware of the school's website and reviewing the format of student planners. The school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

This sixth form provides a good education for all its students. Good leadership has ensured that the arrangements for collaboration with the other two partner schools in the JSF are effective and that students at Carre's are making good progress. Standards are above average and approximately 95 per cent of students continue to study for A levels after their success at

AS levels in Year 12. A high proportion (85 per cent) are offered university places when they leave school showing good progress over time. Currently four students have been offered places at Cambridge University. There were examples of good practice seen in the parts of lessons observed, such as the high expectations for students' learning, good subject knowledge and good use of assessment. Students receive good guidance about opportunities beyond school but they are less well informed about their course choices when entering the sixth form. As a result, some students make inappropriate option choices and have difficulty coping with the demands of advanced level courses. Personal development is outstanding. Students have very positive attitudes and say they greatly enjoy their sixth form experience. They work as sports leaders in local schools and, as community sports leaders, they sometimes teach sports to groups of pupils in the main school. They act responsibly as prefects providing very good role models to students in the main school. The curriculum is good with a very wide range of course on offer to students through the JSF arrangements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise levels of achievement further throughout the school, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form by setting higher expectations for learning.
- Ensure the plans for developing the curriculum are fully implemented so that the number of examination courses taken by individual students more closely matches their abilities and needs.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	2
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	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	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
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	2	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	2

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

Annex A

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

31 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Carre's Grammar School, Sleaford, NG34 7DD

Thank you for making me feel so welcome last week. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your school.

Here are some of the things I found out. Your headteacher and all of the staff at the school always keep your best interests at heart and provide excellent care, guidance and support for you. As a result of the strong community ethos in the school, you are turning out to be mature young people with great sense of responsibility by the time you leave. Your personal development is excellent and your attendance and behaviour are good. You enjoy your education and you stay safe and fit and healthy. You are making good progress because teaching is good and you are achieving high academic standards. There are two things which I have asked the school to do to make it even better:

- Expect you to achieve even more in your learning, especially in GCSE mathematics and in sixth form examination courses.
- Make sure that the plans for improving the curriculum are fully implemented so that you always study the right number of subjects to enable you to achieve even better GCSE grades in those subjects.

The headteacher, staff and governors are determined to make your school even better than it is already. You can help by working hard in lessons so that you can make excellent progress in your learning.

Best wishes for you future and good luck with your examinations.

Declan McCarthy

Lead inspector