



The King Edward VI Grammar School, Louth

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120701
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291837
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Paula Heaney HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	Edward Street
School category	Foundation		Louth
Age range of pupils	11–18		Lincolnshire LN11 9LL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01507 600456
Number on roll (school)	833	Fax number	01507 600316
Number on roll (6th form)	233		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Stella Phillips
		Headteacher	Mrs Claire Hewitt
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	6–7 December 2006	291837

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Students in Years 7 to 11 have been selected from the top 25% of the ability range as judged by their performance in the selection test operated by the consortium of Lincolnshire selective schools. Students' attainment on entry is well above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low and very few students are eligible for free school meals. Students join the school from over 25 different primary schools. The school has specialist science status which commenced in 2003.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection concurs with the school's self-evaluation that this is a good school with some outstanding features. Based on the school's track record of improvement, it has good capacity to improve further. The standards the students reach are exceptionally high in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the progress the students make is good and improving. There has been significant improvement in students' progress in English at Key Stage 3. In 2006, almost all students gained five or more GCSE grades A* - C with half of the students gaining only A* - A grades. The breadth of students' understanding in science reflects the school's science status. Standards in the sixth form are rising and are above average in Year 13 examinations.

The self-evaluation provides a fair reflection of what is good in the school and where improvements need to be made. During the inspection teaching and learning were found to be better in the sixth form than in the main school. Students respond enthusiastically and make better progress when there are activities which challenge and involve them in lessons. Where lessons are more teacher led and students more passive, opportunities for targeting individual students' needs and abilities, including the more able, are missed. Inspectors found this to be the case in half of the lessons they observed. Strategies are in place to improve teaching and learning further to raise the overall quality, particularly in the main school. Where teachers' marking provides detailed comments, students know what to do to improve. However, this is not consistent across the school. A new system is now in place to develop individual students' progress further, but is not yet ensuring that all students progress to the best of their abilities.

Students' attitudes to learning are generally positive and they behave well. They speak very highly of the range of interesting subjects on offer and of the exceptional range of activities in which they can take part. These include musical and theatrical events, the cadet corps, language exchanges, science groups, work experience and a broad range of sports, trips and visits. They feel that the school is a safe and caring community although the location and size of the canteen facilities are not ideal. Plans are underway to improve the school facilities sensitively, in the context of its history which dates back to 1551. Many parents speak very highly of the school. One parent said, 'The school provides a secure, caring and well disciplined environment in which the children can concentrate on learning'.

The headteacher provides very effective and motivational leadership. This is focused clearly on actions the staff need to take to ensure the school continues to improve. The leadership team has been restructured effectively around the principles of school improvement and greater accountability. The school supports staff effectively to ensure students at King Edward VI make good progress and develop as mature individuals. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Sixth form effectiveness is good and it is led and managed well by experienced staff. Standards are rising steadily because the teaching is good. Most students progress well and meet or exceed their targets. The school admits to an unsatisfactory work ethic amongst a few students, which it is taking positive steps to resolve. Students successfully reach their ambition to go on to further or higher education or employment. Courses are matched well to students' aspirations. Care and guidance are good and students' contribution to the community is excellent. They leave the school as mature individuals ready for the next stage in their lives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all students are actively involved and challenged in lessons by improving further the quality of learning and the teaching which underpins it, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Sharpen individual target setting for all students, particularly for the most able, to ensure they progress to the best of their abilities.
- Provide more detailed feedback when marking students' work so they know better what to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students make good progress and achieve well. They reach very high standards by Years 9 and 11 and above average standards in the sixth form. Standards have been improving steadily in recent years. In 2006, all but four Year 11 students gained their expected passes at grades A* - C, with half attaining the highest A* - A in all their exams. These results were the school's best ever, aided by a significant improvement in English. The school's yearly targets reflect the high expectations it has for its students and are suitably challenging. They require refining to provide even greater challenge for more gifted and talented students. Current standards in work and lessons seen during the inspection are above average and students' achievement is good overall. However, the progress students make from lesson to lesson is variable, because their active participation is sometimes limited by their teachers in the main school. Teaching methods, including marking, and the insistence on high standards of presentation, are inconsistent and sometimes inhibit progress. Nevertheless, students are on track to attain high standards and achieve well this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' attendance is outstanding in Key stages 3 and 4 and they behave well both around the school, despite the difficulties of the accommodation, and in class, even when some lessons lack sufficient challenge. They are eager to learn and this is a major reason for their good progress and very high standards of work. Bullying has become increasingly rare. Students know they will be heard and that effective action will be taken. The school has responded to the concerns of some parents by engaging supervisors at lunchtime.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they support a number of charitable causes generously. The outstanding range of extra curricular activities and trips is invaluable in widening their horizons. Work related learning underpins teaching and learning across the curriculum, ensuring that students are extremely well prepared for their futures. Business and social links with the local community are outstanding. The school council is effective in representing the views of students on a broad range of issues. Many students take part in the excellent range of extra curricular sporting and other recreational activities. Students have a good knowledge of how to be safe and healthy. Good improvements have been made to the lunchtime menu, though too few students use the canteen.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. The school has identified as a priority the need to develop students' independent learning skills and ensure that they are more active learners in the main school. This has already been a focus of training for teachers. Where these principles are applied in practice, learning is high quality. In a science lesson, the teacher set challenging standards, tailored work to the needs and abilities of all individuals and students were fully engaged and committed to produce excellent work. In other effective lessons, well planned activities make students think hard about their learning and ensure good progress.

Teaching remains inconsistent in quality. Half the lessons observed were no better than satisfactory. Such lessons are often dominated by the teacher and so students are passive listeners for long periods. Students are not sufficiently engaged in or responsible for their own learning, particularly the more able. Their learning is not always monitored effectively by, for example, targeted questions during or at the end of lessons. Inspectors saw examples of effective feedback to students, both written

and oral, but marking is not focused clearly enough on helping students to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good both in the main school and the sixth form. A broad range of subjects, including two modern foreign languages and good provision for information and communication technology (ICT), meets the requirements of the National Curriculum well in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, a wide range of GCSE courses meets the needs of those academically inclined very well. Opportunities in science are particularly good. Currently no vocational courses are offered. However, the school is in partnership with other local schools to develop the 14-19 curriculum and there are firm plans to extend the range of qualifications. An extensive range of advanced level courses meets the needs of those students who stay on after Year 11 effectively. The school provides outstanding enrichment across the curriculum. Participation is high in sport, music and drama and activities arising from specialist science status and the cadet corps. These provide outstanding opportunities for personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

A good induction system for new students ensures that they settle in quickly. Communication between form tutors and subject teachers is very good. Students' progress and learning are monitored carefully, with mentors to support those who appear to be achieving less than is expected of them. Students with learning disabilities and difficulties are supported well through individual educational plans and by classroom assistants. Students who are gifted and talented are identified, and many benefit from the excellent range of enrichment activities, but within lessons the level of challenge provided is frequently no different from that offered to all other students. Despite the complications of the site, the school makes great efforts to ensure that students are educated in a pleasant environment. Health and safety procedures and arrangements for child protection are rigorous. Contact with agencies supporting any students who may be at risk is effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's leadership is very good and has been a key factor in shaping the direction of the school. Consequently, it is focused effectively on school improvement. She has ensured that all staff and governors share

a clear vision of what the school needs to do to improve further. The school's aim is to 'strive for all round excellence'. A restructuring of the senior leadership team has taken place recently. Roles are now better organised around key functions and accountabilities, but it is too early to report on its impact. The secondment of a deputy head for two days each week is supporting the senior leadership team in their review and monitoring work effectively. Middle managers are now more actively involved in raising standards and are supported well by the senior leadership team.

The procedures for checking the effectiveness of learning and students' progress are developing satisfactorily. Work is also well underway to improve how individual student targets are set and reviewed. The development plan is tightly focused on raising the standard of learning and teaching, but the school recognises the need to improve this further.

Resources are managed and deployed well, using best practice principles. Plans to upgrade the accommodation are underway. Governance of the school is good. The newly appointed chair is frequently seen around the school and is known to the students. The governors question the senior leadership team effectively on progress and the impact of new initiatives.

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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?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
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	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	2	

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	1	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	1	1

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?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

8 December 2006

Dear Students

King Edward VI Grammar School, Edward Street, Louth, Lincolnshire, LN11 9LL

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. Firstly I would like to thank you for your openness and cooperation during our visit. We enjoyed meeting some of you and appreciated your comments and opinions.

The inspection found that this is a good school. Test results at the end of Year 9 and GCSE results at the end of Year 11 are outstanding. The A Level results at the end of Year 13 are above average.

Where we saw good lessons, these were interesting and challenging with a good range of activities tailored to your abilities. You told us you enjoy these lessons and can achieve the best you can. Your attendance is outstanding in Key Stages 3 and 4 and you behave well. You enjoy your education and value the exceptional range of activities available to you.

We have asked the headteacher to take action on three things:

- ensure you are all actively involved and challenged in lessons
- work with you individually to ensure you progress to the best of your abilities
- provide detailed feedback when marking your work so you know better what to do to improve.

We wish you well with your future studies.

Paula Heaney

Her Majesty's Inspector