

The Sir William Robertson High School, Welbourn

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120716
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291840
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Pam Haezewindt HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	878
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Dixon
Headteacher	Mr Ian Wright
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2001
School address	Main Road Welbourn Lincoln LN5 0PA
Telephone number	01400 272422
Fax number	01400 273780

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Sir William Robertson High School is an average size, non-selective secondary school in rural Lincolnshire. The number on roll has risen significantly in recent years. On average, 23% of the most able pupils in the area enter grammar schools, and this is particularly the case for girls. This results in consistently higher numbers of boys than girls attending, and attainment is broadly average on entry. The very large majority of pupils are White British. Whilst the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average, the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is well below average. The school became a Specialist Language College (SLC) in 2001 and was re-designated in 2006 having 'substantially met the objectives in the original bid'. It holds the Investors in People Award, the Silver Sports Mark, the Careers Mark, and is working towards the Healthy Schools Award. The school is also gathering evidence for the International School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence confirms the school's evaluation that The Sir William Robertson High School is an effective school with some exceptional features. It knows itself well and demonstrates very good capacity to improve. Pupils, parents, staff and governors, and members of the community, are rightly proud of the school. Staff members described the school as 'fantastic' saying that 'it is the pupils who make it so'. Pupils said that 'teachers are very good at enabling us to learn and they give up their time willingly outside of lessons'. Pupils were overwhelmingly positive about the school. The new Year 11 year book, which was requested by the pupils themselves, shows how they hold the school in good esteem. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire were very pleased with the school and many made comments such as, 'Our child has grown socially, educationally and emotionally during the first year' and 'We made an excellent choice by choosing this school for our son'.

Overall, standards and achievement are good and pupils enjoy their learning. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 11 in mathematics, and of a few pupils in English, was disappointing in 2006 and brought down the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE A* to C grades, despite some excellent results in other subjects. Since September the English and mathematics departments have worked hard to improve things and current course work outcomes confirm improved achievement. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress, especially in English and science and their results in their tests at the end of Year 9 in 2006 were above average overall.

Almost all pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Attendance is well above average. Behaviour and attitudes to learning, as well as to school life, are excellent. The school is a calm place and pupils move about it calmly and efficiently. There is no school bell, yet punctuality to lessons is good. Once in lessons pupils demonstrate interest and a willingness to contribute and work in different ways, in pairs, groups and individually, as well as corporately as a class. They are socially adept. Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations and its mantra: ASPIRE.

Although there is almost no bullying, the School Council felt that it would be good to raise more awareness of what bullying is and it is an aspect that one House Council is working on this year. Beyond the school curriculum, pupils experience different cultures through the many trips to other countries and the visitors they have in school, and the way these are exploited educationally. The impact of being a Specialist Language College has influenced this greatly.

Pupils are very aware of health and safety. They know that they are in a safe environment in school and that there is always someone to go to should they need to. There is a high take up of 'out of lesson' physical activity. Pupils know what to eat to be healthy even if they do not always do so. They make an excellent contribution to the community and develop well those skills which will help their economic well-being, despite the glitch in English and mathematics last year. Almost all pupils want to continue their education or training when they leave school. Throughout school they develop skills in working in teams or groups, including being leaders.

The school is well led and managed. Very good self evaluation, and excellent systems for monitoring and improving behaviour, attendance, pupils' progress, teaching and learning, and seeking the views of stakeholders, ensure that provision is good across all aspects with some outstanding. The good and sometimes outstanding teaching results in good achievement, and when it is not so good, it is quickly analysed and improvement measures put in place. The school's curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced and a link with another school is just

beginning to bear fruit. Discussions with a 'local' college are also planned. Despite the school's rural location, links with external agencies, businesses and the community are excellent. Care, guidance and support are excellent too. Governors play their part in school life well. They are supportive, and they also challenge the school, adhering to their edict that 'pupils have only one chance'. Most, but not yet all, middle leaders evaluate their subjects and aspects well and put in place suitable improvement plans. The school's funding is low compared to many similar schools but it is very well managed to maintain a good level of staffing and resources and to improve the accommodation, for example music and performing arts accommodation is being improved. Resources through the Specialist Language College have enhanced provision across the school. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that mathematics in Key Stage 4 continues to improve through challenging lessons and targeting pupils who need support to achieve their potential.
- Ensure that all middle leaders' self-evaluation is as good as the best and that all improvement plans focus on pupil achievement.
- Develop further the breadth of curriculum provision and the variety of courses from 14 onwards through further engagement with local colleges and institutions.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. By the end of 2006 Year 11 pupils who joined the school in 2001 had made good progress overall and they achieved excellent GCSE grades in some of the foundation subjects. They entered the school with broadly average attainment although below average at the higher levels. However, their progress and attainment in English and mathematics due to staffing problems, was not quite as good. The school has made strong efforts to redress the situation and it is now clear that pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving well in English and are predicted to attain much higher results. In mathematics improvements have also been made with predictions of at least average results. The numbers of pupils gaining five A* to G grades in GCSE was above average. Pupils in Year 9 at the end of 2006 made good progress, particularly in English and science. Their test results in English and science were also above average. Those for mathematics were broadly average. There is no significant difference in the achievement of groups of pupils, except that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make particularly good progress, especially those with the most severe difficulties. The school prides itself on the number of qualifications with which these young people leave school. Results in languages are above average and targets for 2006 were met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Pupils' attendance is very good and unauthorised absence is extremely low. They behave exceptionally well in lessons and around school and pupils report that there is rarely any disruption to their learning. They are articulate and very keen to describe how good the school is and how it helps them. Pupils' contribution to the community is excellent. Many are willing to take on responsibilities such as being prefects, school or house councillors and they are proactive in suggesting initiatives, such as improvements to the 'expectations cards'. They help out with visitors on open evenings, play their part in staff appointments,

contribute to school productions, and, along with parents, helped to renovate the school pond. They also contribute very well to the wider community, which, given the location of the school, is no mean feat. Year 10 work placements sometimes result in further employment or linked training because pupils are mature and highly regarded. Pupils feel safe at school and know well how to keep safe and healthy. They are caring towards others. An example of this was when one of the school buses crashed and older pupils comforted the younger ones.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and some is outstanding. Many teachers use a variety of teaching approaches that take into account pupils' different learning styles. This helps pupils achieve their potential and gain life skills. Learning objectives are displayed in classrooms and explained well by teachers. Lessons are well planned to meet these objectives. Lessons get under way calmly, and starters are well thought out to link with the main activities. Plenary sessions are beginning to be helpful. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson this was particularly the case where the teacher left enough time for pupils to reflect on what they had learned throughout the lesson by considering a related question in their recent examination which had not been well-answered. On-going, peer and pupil self assessment are being built into lessons. Pupils say they experience this in almost all subjects. The school's extensive programme of lesson observation ensures that teaching continues to improve. Staff who need support receive it. There has been training on improving marking and there is some evidence that targets are being set and pupils know them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and in some respects outstanding. Statutory requirements are met in both key stages. The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced in Key Stage 4, with alternative accreditations to GCSE for students who need them. A vocational qualification in information and communication technology (ICT) and some applied GCSEs provide a vocational flavour in some subjects. The rural location makes it difficult for the school to expand provision through off-site arrangements, for example, at any of the local colleges, but it is investigating this in more detail. Media studies will be delivered from September 2007 in conjunction with a 'local' school. Due to language college status there are three languages available. Almost all pupils study two in Key Stage 3 and at least one in Key Stage 4. The curriculum is flexible and pupils can, and do, take early GCSEs, for example in Year 10 in languages and mathematics.

There is not as much time in the curriculum for physical education in all years as the school would like, but this is being increased in Year 9 from September. The personal, social and health education programme provides pupils with opportunities to learn about health and safety. There are very good opportunities for learning about the world of work, for example, the Industry Day for Year 9, the Cargill Challenge, two-week work placements, and the annual Futures Day for Year 11. The Junior Sports Leadership Award promotes team building and leadership skills. There is an extensive range of out of lesson opportunities, including an outstanding number of trips and activities, many to Europe and beyond, which pupils really appreciate. This contributes very well to their social, cultural, and sometimes spiritual development. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is very good and

good opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to develop their skills are provided and well supported. Although these are mainly outside of lesson time, planning for more extensive provision in lessons is underway.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Overall, care, guidance and support are excellent. Pupils feel very secure and there is always someone to go to if help is needed. There is a comprehensive system for tracking all pupils' progress and identifying where they need support. The form tutor is the first port of call for providing help and guidance with links to the Year Heads or Heads of Subject Departments, depending on what is required. A full time learning mentor provides valuable support and has, among other areas, worked very well this year to improve outcomes in mathematics. Overall, support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve well, is excellent. The school communicates with parents about pupils' progress through open evenings, pupils' planners and reports, which are detailed with good targets for improvement. Pupils report that their planners are checked regularly both by parents and form tutors. Parent questionnaires seek their views. Despite this, a few parents would like more frequent contact, for example, by holding more open evenings. The school does its best to ensure that pupils choose a balanced curriculum in Key Stage 4 and there is ample support for doing so. The transition into Year 7 and Year 10 is well supported and careers guidance comprehensive. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are very good, including detailed recording of any racist incidents of which there has only been one.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The head and senior leadership team provide very good direction for the school, supported well by governors. The ethos of the school is about enjoyable and meaningful learning which extends well beyond the school's confines.

Consequently, there is an excellent climate for learning that pervades the whole school ensuring good achievement and excellent personal development. Monitoring of pupils' behaviour, attendance, and progress, and teaching and learning is excellent. Self evaluation at the senior leadership level is rigorous and based on a range of information from monitoring, such as assessment data, good quality lesson observations, listening to pupils, staff and parents. As a consequence, school improvement planning is well focussed on the priorities needed to improve pupil performance. At middle leader level it is not yet quite as well focussed in a minority of subjects. In September 2006, links between pastoral and academic leadership were strengthened and the senior leadership team restructured so that each member has a key role to play in school development. This is working well. A strength of the school is the way it has supported staff to become teachers, teachers to become leaders, and has 'grown' its staff from within. Another is its commitment to specialist language college status and the range of provision and opportunities that provides. The school deploys its resources well, especially its accommodation where space is very tight due to the growing numbers of pupils who attend this popular school. The grounds are clean and calm with quiet areas for pupils to reflect or congregate. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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
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	1
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Sir William Robertson High School Welbourn, Lincoln LN50PA

I should like to thank you very much for your warm welcome to the school on Wednesday, 16 May 2007. I enjoyed meeting you or seeing you in lessons and about the school. I was very impressed by how hard working you are, and by how much you wanted to talk about your school and the things you like about it.

I was very pleased to find that The Sir William Robertson High school is a good school with some outstanding features. Most importantly it is providing you with a good education and helping you to develop very well.

- Overall you make good progress.
- Your personal development is excellent. You contribute exceptionally well to school life and the community.
- Teaching is mainly good with some that is outstanding.
- You are provided with a broad curriculum and an outstanding array of activities and trips which help you to develop very well socially and culturally.
- Your school is well led and staff have high expectations of you. They care for you very well and have your best interests at heart.
- Being a specialist language college has improved your resources and opportunities, including the opportunity to develop as an international citizen.

There are just a few areas where the school might make improvements so I have asked your headteacher and staff to make sure that mathematics results continue to improve in Key Stage 4, that all of the school planning places emphasis on improvement, and that the school sees how much it can involve local colleges in providing wider opportunities and more courses for you from 14 onwards. You might like to suggest what sort of courses you would like beyond what you are already offered.

Once again, thank you for your warm welcome. Best wishes for the future.

Pam Haezewindt HMI Lead inspector