

Yarborough School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120703
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327346
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Nada Trikic HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	850
Sixth form	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Dubut
Headteacher	Mr Rob Boothroyd
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005
School address	Riseholme Road Lincoln Lincolnshire LN1 3SP
Telephone number	01522529203
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Age group	11–18
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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

Yarborough became a specialist school for business and enterprise in 2003. Sixth form provision is made in partnership with one other school. It serves an area with levels of deprivation above the national average. The great majority of students are from White British backgrounds, with a small number from other ethnic groups. The number with English as an additional language is well below average, with few at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. The number with a statement of special educational need is broadly average, although the overall number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average.

The school has gained the National Standard for Work Experience, Careers Mark, International and Healthy Schools Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Yarborough is a good and improving business and enterprise school. The impact of the specialism has led to significant strengths. One reason for the school's success is the outstanding and diverse curriculum in Key Stage 4, through which every student can experience success. This includes an impressive range of qualifications and courses tailored to the needs of students, and as a result, they make good progress. In addition, leaders and staff have been effective in creating an inclusive and cohesive school ethos with a strong focus on students' well-being. Attitudes to learning have strengthened in recent years. Students and parents value the vibrant learning environment, celebration events and the 'can do' ethos, which contribute to good personal development.

Students make good progress from Year 7 to 11, reaching standards in line with national averages. Standards and achievement have been variable in Key Stage 3 since the time of the last inspection. This pattern is partly due to weaknesses in leadership, teaching, assessment, staff absence and turnover. Staffing is now stable, supporting greater continuity in learning. Recent improvements in the use of assessment data mean that the school is better able to identify individuals and groups who may be at risk of not reaching their potential. However, leaders recognise that this is not yet sufficiently embedded to drive consistent improvement linked to challenging targets, particularly in mathematics. Students receive high quality care and levels of guidance and support are generally good. As they move through the school, students receive excellent advice to help them to make decisions about course choices and progression beyond Year 11. They know their targets but guidance to support academic improvement is not consistently in place across the school. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall, supported by strong relationships between staff and students. Regular and sustained classroom observation by senior staff have resulted in even more lessons being good or better, through the identification and sharing of good practice. Outstanding local, national and international links and highly effective partnerships enrich the curriculum, promote good community cohesion, and ensure that students acquire a range of valuable experiences and skills through activities, enterprise challenges and visits. These contribute greatly to students' cultural development and global awareness, and prepare them exceptionally well for future economic well-being. The curriculum is outstanding because Yarborough is a busy school, constantly seeking innovative approaches, such as the popular newly established curriculum enrichment programmes, to engage and interest learners. Student contributions to the school and the community are impressive. They voice their opinions confidently and participate enthusiastically in community activities.

Good leadership and management have seized opportunities to provide a unique education for the young people of Yarborough and to drive improvement. Confidence and morale in the school are high. Leaders know the strengths of the school and where improvement is needed. However, some key priorities are not translated in to action plans with measurable outcomes for students, with regular checks to review and evaluate progress. For example, mathematics has not made the improvement expected since the time of the last inspection. Members of the governing body represent the community well, promote links with business, and attract funding to enhance accommodation and resources.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Standards in the sixth form are above average and achievement is good. In 2007, AS and A level pass rates were below the national average, although results in vocational subjects were above average representing good progress. School analyses of 2008 results indicate that challenging targets were exceeded, particularly in the proportion of higher grades. Furthermore, results in vocational subjects, especially in business studies, are above average. However, there is too much variation between subjects, as the system to track students' progress is not yet fully embedded. Students' personal development and well-being are particularly good. Students say they especially appreciate the help and guidance they receive from teachers which helps them to enjoy learning. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers inspire confidence through their expert subject knowledge. As a result, learning is enthusiastic and purposeful.

Good overall standards of care, guidance and support provided for students in the main school continue in the harmonious sixth form. In response to the encouragement and good careers guidance Year 11 students receive, over half enrol in the sixth form, in addition to students from other schools. Many students speak of their determination to reach targets because they have high aspirations for the next stage of education or training. Good leadership and management are focused successfully on raising achievement. Partnerships forged through business and enterprise specialist status contribute to students' good education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching in mathematics promotes good progress, engages students and provides them with opportunities to share and discuss their learning.
- Ensure that initiatives for quality assurance, and assessment, tracking and intervention are embedded across the school to keep students on track to meet challenging targets.
- Improve the quality of planning for school priorities to include measurable outcomes for students, with timelines to monitor and evaluate improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

There has been a sharp rise in the proportion of students gaining five or more high grade passes in recent years with vocational courses, such as business studies and sports studies, making an impressive contribution. However, the percentage of those achieving higher grade passes in English and mathematics is significantly lower than the national average, leading to broadly average standards overall. Students' skills in mathematics remain weaker than other subjects.

There has been an uneven picture across English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 3 since the previous inspection. In 2007, standards were well below national averages in all subjects with progress in English significantly below expectation. School analysis for 2008, supported by inspection evidence, indicates improved standards and achievement in English. A legacy of disruption to learning in mathematics and science has slowed rates of progress. In addition, progress tracking and intervention is underdeveloped. Good provision for information and communication technology ensures that students have the confidence to apply their skills across the curriculum.

As a result of good quality care, guidance and teaching, students at an early stage in learning English and those with learning difficulties progress well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good behaviour of most students contributes to a positive climate for learning. Students understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and appreciate the excellent sports facilities. Participation rates in the variety of after-school sports are high. Students enjoy school and this is shown in the improving attendance rates that are now close to the national average. They feel safe and know that if bullying occurs it is dealt with effectively. Spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good and there are good opportunities for individual reflection and appreciation of the views of others. Through citizenship, ethics and religious education students gain a good understanding of different beliefs, and shared values across different ethnic groups. Leaders recognise that links with another school would further strengthen awareness of cultural diversity within Britain. Strong links with schools in other countries has helped to enrich student understanding of other cultures.

The school council enables students to share ideas and concerns, and has been effective in making improvements to the environment. Students' personal skills and confidence are enhanced through involvement in a wide variety of initiatives in the local community. They participate enthusiastically in community projects, and have a strong commitment to environmental and charity events. Good use is made of the careers service in order to give students the confidence to move on to their next stage of employment or training. Work experience and vocational courses contribute exceptionally well to students' future economic well-being. Although sixth formers act as 'buddies' to younger students and help support reading there is scope for students throughout the school to be given more responsibilities in order to develop leadership skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Notable strengths in teaching include teachers' subject knowledge and preparation of well-planned lessons. Teachers have high expectations of students and benefit from productive relationships so that students enjoy their lessons. At its very best, teaching conveys a sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning, and staff are willing to take risks using more challenging teaching strategies.

Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good it is generally because there is limited challenge and the pace of the lesson is slow. In some classes, work is not well matched to the abilities of students and, as a result, some do not make sufficient progress.

Marking of students' work is regular and detailed. Students know their targets and how well they are doing against the National Curriculum attainment levels and GCSE grades. They are not always sure exactly what they must do to meet their targets. Students who have learning difficulties generally perform well because their needs are well known to teachers and the work is set at an appropriate level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Statutory requirements are fulfilled and the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that fully meets the varying needs of students. It provides well for all learners, including those with

learning difficulties, or at an early stage in learning English. In Key Stage 4, there is a wide range of vocational courses matched to the diverse needs of students. Extensive work-related learning experiences including a successful work experience programme prepare students exceptionally well for their future working lives. Opportunities for students to gain skills in literacy and numeracy are highlighted in individual lessons but are less evident across subjects.

Opportunities for students to learn outside lessons are extensive with a vast range of extra curricular activities, which make a significant contribution to students' enjoyment of learning and personal development. The school is actively involved in competitions and visits ranging from radio advertising to street theatre that challenge and interest students from across the ability range. Enrichment is offered through a variety of activities including journalism, street dance, gardening and mathematical puzzles.

Specialist school status is having a positive effect in improving facilities and raising expectations. The collaborative work of the school is excellent and has benefited partner schools, and the wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Guidance and support are good and care is excellent. Form tutors are well-informed about students' needs and strong pastoral support is available at all levels. Transition arrangements are a particularly successful aspect with firm links established with feeder primary schools ensuring students feel welcome. Transition to GCSE courses is managed well, with students given excellent personal guidance before choosing from a large selection of subjects.

Child protection arrangements are in place and safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements. Academic guidance is variable and whilst most students are aware of subject targets there is a lack of consistency in showing students how they can improve. New students from minority ethnic groups are helped to settle with the assistance of 'buddies', and their contribution to the life of the school is appreciated. Highly effective links with a variety of outside agencies ensure that vulnerable students, looked after children and students with additional needs are well supported and make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's vision and drive for improvement has been successful in developing a culture of high expectations in which achievement is both promoted and celebrated. Senior leaders form an effective, enterprising and ambitious team who view change as an opportunity to improve provision as shown through the successful delivery of new initiatives. Specialist status has been the catalyst for high quality links within the community and with business to enrich the experiences of students, and to raise aspirations. These features contribute effectively to community cohesion and ensure that students appreciate their rights and responsibilities. Leaders have an effective strategy for promoting students' understanding of global communities through school links in Tanzania, France and Afghanistan.

Good systems are in place for senior and middle leaders to check the quality of work through lesson observation, book scrutiny and progress checks. This is demonstrated through an increased focus on coaching and mentoring. The use of challenging targets to aid improvement is good

although efficient tracking systems are not yet securely in place to provide timely and sharply focused analysis to enable leaders and governors to check on progress.

Members of the governing body are regular visitors and have subject links to strengthen their knowledge and monitoring of the school. This approach is supporting greater teamwork across the school community. The track record of improvement in Key Stage 4 alongside the positive impact of the specialism provides convincing evidence of the school's good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

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	3	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/or disabilities make progress	2	

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	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	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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 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 eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Yarborough School, Lincoln, LN1 3SP

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when we came to inspect your school recently. We were impressed with your positive attitudes and good behaviour. Yarborough School is providing a good and improving education. You contribute greatly to the school's success. The students we spoke to were very impressed with the outstanding range of opportunities, both in and out of the classroom, to make education fun and interesting. You are rightly proud of your school, which is a vibrant place to learn. You appreciate very much the time staff give up to extend your experiences. Since becoming a business and enterprise school, there have been many successful changes, including new courses, which have led to good achievement in Key Stage 4. Students in the sixth form are equally successful. Strong links with partners locally, nationally and internationally have improved the status and reputation of the school.

You told us that you feel safe in school, and that adults support and care for you exceptionally well. Those we spoke to felt the school council was working well and provided opportunities to discuss issues of concern, which had led to some improvements. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and getting stronger. From talking to you and observing your lessons, we know that you learn best when you are involved in a variety of tasks with opportunities for paired, group, practical and independent work that is planned to challenge you, and make you think about your learning.

The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership and work well with staff to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to succeed. At the end of the inspection, we decided that there are a few areas that could be improved to make the school even more successful. Results in mathematics have not been as strong as in other subjects, so we have asked teachers to help you progress at a faster rate. We think that the way the school checks on your progress could be strengthened, so you can be helped to keep on track in all subjects. We have also asked the leaders and governors to make sure that clear plans are put in place so progress can be checked more regularly.

You, yourselves can help by attending every day, thinking about what you are learning in lessons, and what you need to do to improve.

Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikic

Her Majesty's Inspector