

Lincoln Christ's Hospital School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120704
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327347
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Cragg HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1384
Sixth form	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Canon Alan Nugent
Headteacher	Dr Andy Wright
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2006
School address	Wragby Road Lincoln Lincolnshire LN2 4PN
Telephone number	01522881144
Fax number	01522881145

Age group	11–19
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Inspection number	327347

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average with a growing sixth form. It draws students from a mixed area with some communities of significant social disadvantage. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below the national average but relatively high for the local authority. There is an increasing number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, around 8% of the school, many of whom speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average but for those with a statement of special educational needs it is higher than average. The school became a specialist languages college in 2001 and has achieved the International School Award on three occasions since. It achieved the Healthy Schools Award in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its students. It has improved rapidly since its last inspection, particularly in the standards achieved by Year 11 students in 2008, which were in line with the national average. Students' achievement is good overall and in the sixth form. This is a very inclusive school where all students are valued and those with learning difficulties or English language needs achieve well because of effectively targeted support. There is a very high level of care and guidance for students, who respond with very positive attitudes to their learning. They treat each other with respect and say that they feel safe in school. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are also very positive about the work of the school.

The curriculum has developed considerably in the past three years, accompanied by significant investment in facilities for learning. It is now broad and offers a wide range of courses to suit students' varying needs. In particular, choice in the sixth form curriculum has expanded to cater for students with a wider range of ability and interests, leading to better access and growing numbers. There are very good partnerships with the Cathedral, local schools, organisations, the community and businesses which enrich students' experience and prepare them well for adult life. The school's specialist language status has dramatically improved participation and success in modern language courses. It has also made an excellent contribution to students' awareness of modern British and global communities through a range of activities, events and residential trips.

Teaching overall is good with examples of outstanding lessons. There are clear expectations for how learning should be developed. However, not all teachers are confident with the approaches used in the best lessons, particularly in extending students' thinking through challenging questions and providing opportunities for them to learn independently. Detailed systems for assessing students and tracking their progress lead to effective intervention where necessary.

The headteacher, with senior staff, sets a very clear vision and direction for the school and this is shared by staff and governors. Systems for self-evaluation are accurate and lead to correctly identified priorities for improvement. Increasingly middle leaders monitor their subjects effectively although there is still variation across subjects, as is seen in the differential quality of marking. This also leads to differences in the quality of students' organisation and presentation of work. Staff work well in teams and morale is high. Professional development is a strong feature in the improvement of the school. Resources are deployed effectively and value for money is good. The school has tackled the key areas highlighted in its last inspection effectively, leading to rapid improvement. It has outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is effective and very inclusive. Because there is 'open entry', students start courses with attainment that is below the average for sixth forms. Almost all students complete their courses. They make good progress to achieve standards that are broadly in line with the national average. The outstanding curriculum is based on flexibility and breadth. Courses cater for a range of practical, vocational, academic or creative interests at different levels. The school's languages specialism contributes excellent results and several language-related initiatives

locally and nationally. Students' progress is monitored extremely well through the thorough tracking and mentoring system. Relationships among staff and students are very positive, and the good teaching derives from excellent subject knowledge. Students enjoy their studies and have very positive attitudes to their learning. Many contribute effectively to their community through a good range of responsibilities. The sixth form is led well with effective steps taken to expand and develop the quality of provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teaching reaches the standard of the best, especially in using questions to extend students' thinking and in developing independent learning.
- Ensure that all subject leaders secure the key aspects of the school's policy on marking and feedback to students, including high expectations for students' organisation and presentation of their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students' achievement is good. They enter the school with attainment which is broadly average overall, though many are below average. In 2008, by the end of Year 9, they reached standards that were broadly average and made at least satisfactory progress from their starting points. Standards at Key Stage 4 have improved dramatically in the last three years. In 2008, they were at least average across all indicators. Students made good progress to exceed the challenging targets set for them. The proportion of students achieving at least five higher GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was almost double that from 2006. Results in modern foreign languages at GCSE were almost double the level found nationally, demonstrating the impact of the school's specialist status. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least good progress because of the very good provision to support their needs. Those students who speak English as an additional language make at least expected progress, related to their stage of language acquisition. Boys make good progress compared to girls in relation to the national gap in performance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students feel very well-supported and safe. The incidence of bullying and racist incidents is remarkably low, as students respect one another and readily engage with those of a different cultural background. They are confident that any issues are dealt with effectively. Behaviour is good around the school and in lessons. Students say they enjoy school, especially when motivated by lessons that are stimulating. The vast majority of parents agree that their child enjoys school and is making progress. Attendance is improving and is now good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent as shown in students' attitude and relationships with one another and with adults. Students' contribution to the community of the school is also excellent, shown in their commitment to charity events. Sixth formers mentor students in the lower school and the new house system encourages student involvement in the community. There are many links with schools overseas which have resulted in greater awareness of other cultures. Menus, supported by information across the curriculum, encourage healthy eating habits and the take up of school meals is good. There is a good range of sporting extra curricular activities and participation is growing. Students develop many work-related skills that provide well for their future working lives. The school council makes a definite impact on

school life and students increasingly suggest improvements, such as in uniform, which are then implemented. They also interview prospective teachers and some are engaged in providing feedback on teaching and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school has good policies which define effective learning, set clear guidelines for teachers and tell the students what they can expect from the marking of their work to help them improve. Where teaching is good or better these policies are securely in place and, consequently, students make at least good progress. Lessons are well planned with a variety of different activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and gives confidence to their explanations and use of questions. They provide rich opportunities for students to learn independently and to assess their own and their fellow students' work. There are very good relationships in classrooms and students trust their teachers to help them to learn. However this practice is not yet consistent enough across the school. Where teaching is less effective, activities and questioning are not always matched to all students' needs and the presentation of students' work varies in quality. The very good marking and assessment of students' work seen, for example, in English, art, history and some sixth form vocational courses, is not yet in place consistently. The needs of students with learning difficulties are well identified, and they are very well taught and supported in mainstream classes and specific groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is adapted well to students' individual needs and developing rapidly. Younger students follow a broad curriculum which caters well for those who need additional support or a greater level of challenge. Increasingly, some students follow GCSE courses in Year 9 and enter some GCSEs early. Students choose from a wide selection of subjects in Year 10, offering academic, creative or practical routes at various levels of difficulty. These include a good range of vocational courses and good opportunities for some students to develop engineering and building skills, and undertake work experience placements and link courses with local colleges. In keeping with the school's specialist status, five foreign languages are commonly offered, along with up to 14 other languages when students request them, usually because of their home background or their interest. An excellent range of visits within Britain and overseas greatly enriches students' learning opportunities. These are supported by a good range of other activities, events and trips.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is a very high level of commitment in caring for all students. Health and safety are promoted rigorously and safeguarding is robust. Staff analyse data carefully to identify social and emotional needs and those at risk are helped to remain in this safe school environment and to be successful. The school is doing all that it can to make improvements in attendance through work with outside agencies and innovative arrangements for alternative school provision. The school communicates effectively with parents and there are excellent links with other agencies, in particular for vulnerable students. All students know their targets and are kept

well informed about their achievement and progress. Their performance is tracked regularly and flexible intervention is put in place to ensure that they meet their challenging targets. Students with learning difficulties benefit from excellent support tailored to their needs and make at least good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, with senior staff, sets a very clear vision and direction for the school which has led to rapid improvement over the last three years. There is a rigorous system for monitoring performance, carried out effectively by most middle leaders and drawn together effectively by senior staff. However, some aspects of teaching and marking vary in quality across subjects, indicating that there is not yet consistency in the implementation of policies. Self-evaluation is accurate and the key priorities for development are correctly identified. Staff work very effectively together in teams. Professional development meets individual staff needs and interests and is central to recent improvements across the school. The school sets itself challenging targets and achieves or exceeds them increasingly. All students are valued equally and there is a strong sense of community in the school. Students have a good understanding of the local, national and global communities and make more of an impact than previously through charity, community and social activities. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and have a strategic view for its development based on good systems for reviewing its performance, including regular presentations from staff and detailed review of student progress data. The issues from the last inspection have been tackled firmly. Achievement at Key Stage 4 has improved significantly and behaviour is now good. The rapid improvement in all areas of the school shows clearly that there is outstanding capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
---	----------------	-------

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	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
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	2	

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?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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	1	
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**

13 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Lincoln Christ's Hospital School, Lincoln, LN2 4PN

Thank you, on behalf of the inspection team, for the friendly welcome we received when we visited your school. We enjoyed our discussions with those of you we spoke to in meetings, lessons and around the school. The information you gave helped us to understand your school. This letter is to tell you the outcomes of the inspection.

Your school is improving rapidly and provides you with a good education. The standards reached in external examinations have improved considerably over the last three years and are now broadly average. This is also true for the sixth form. Students made good progress and most achieved or exceeded their targets in 2008. You have a very positive view of the school and get on well together. We were impressed that you said there was very little bullying and that it was dealt with effectively. You have a good range of choices in the curriculum and, increasingly, you can take practical and vocational courses. School facilities are improving and the languages specialism makes a clear impact on your curriculum, success and awareness of other countries and cultures. The teaching you receive is good and teachers know their subjects well. The level of care and support you receive is excellent, particularly in tracking your progress and putting in extra work to help you succeed. The school is well led and staff work together effectively. Your views are shaping changes in the school increasingly such as the uniform, toilet provision and the house system. We heard that some of you are feeding back views on teaching in some subjects.

There are some areas of the school which could improve further. We would like to see all the teaching reach the standards of the best. We suggested that teachers could use questions more effectively to get you thinking more deeply. We also felt that you could be given more independence and responsibility for your learning in some lessons. We noticed that your work was not always marked in ways which help you improve in all subjects and suggested that those responsible for subjects should monitor this carefully. We also felt that you could organise and present your work better in some subjects and want teachers to help you to do this.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed visiting your school and wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg

Her Majesty's Inspector