

# Market Rasen De Aston School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120663
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339749
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Dilip Kadodwala HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.  
The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1057
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	189
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Reverend Alan Robson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ellenor Beighton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Willingham Road Market Rasen Lincolnshire
<b>Telephone number</b>	01673 843415
<b>Fax number</b>	01673 840823
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@de-aston.lincs.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
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<b>Boarding provision</b>	Market Rasen De Aston School
<b>Social care Unique Reference Number</b>	SC060705
<b>Social care inspector</b>	Jackie Callaghan

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors, a social care inspector and four additional inspectors, including one who focused for half a day on the school's provision for safeguarding students. The inspectors visited 34 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and telephone conversations with a few parents. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation including development plans, school and national data and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. 233 parent questionnaires, 38 staff and a sample of 142 student questionnaires also provided additional evidence for inspectors.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment and students' achievement in a range of subjects, including in English and in the specialist subjects of mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 4
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement
- the quality of curricular provision and students' care, guidance and support.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average secondary that became a Foundation school in January 2008. It operates in an area where there is a selective system of education. De Aston serves a large rural catchment area where 70% of students require transport to and from school. The students are mainly from White British backgrounds. The school provides boarding accommodation for 69 students. Of these, the majority are from a range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Chinese from Hong Kong and Macau, followed by students from Black African backgrounds. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs is high compared to national figures. A below average proportion of students are eligible for free school meals. The school has specialist status for mathematics and computing and has achieved Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark awards.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

### Main findings

This is a good school, including the overall effectiveness of the sixth form. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the governing body, ably supported by senior leaders, the school is rapidly improving and building on its strengths successfully. Their expertise in analysing data and managing interventions to deal with underachievement reflects their exceptional drive to embed ambition and drive improvement. The impact is clearly evident in the improvement of students' achievement over recent years and the significant rise in standards. The proportion of five good passes at GCSE including English and mathematics has been average, but has been improving over the last three years. Other important indicators of attainment have been higher and students' achievement is now good. It also reflects the impact of robust systems to track students' progress.

Students' good personal development is evident in the very positive relationships that were seen in lessons inspected and in the many informal exchanges between staff and students. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students have a well developed understanding of right and wrong and respect for diversity, including cultural and religious diversity. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Reported incidents of unacceptable behaviour, for example on buses when travelling to school, are dealt with effectively. Students appreciate the link between attendance and achievement. Where necessary, students respond well to integrated approaches to improve attendance and the rate of persistent absence has reduced very significantly so that attendance is now above average. The school has a very inclusive approach which results in outstanding care, guidance and support, valued highly by parents and students too. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has good flexibility and caters for a range of needs successfully so that many more students gain relevant and worthwhile qualifications. The range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities have a good take up and enhance students' enjoyment of school.

There is much good and increasingly outstanding teaching. However, at times, lessons are too teacher led and there is inconsistency in the use of assessment to support learning. Leaders, including middle managers, are not complacent and recognise that the gains made year-on-year in raising standards at GCSE including English and mathematics need to be accelerated by securing further consistency in good or better teaching. Steps are already being taken to this end and reflected in the challenging targets set for raising attainment in 2010. Since the last inspection, there has been significant improvement in the outcomes in ICT, as well as in the robust tackling of the relative shortfalls in provision. Capacity for sustaining improvement is outstanding because senior leaders have ensured that students' achievement, which has been

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satisfactory, is now solidly good and significantly better than last year. The high achievement of some groups of students has been sustained.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Increase the percentage of GCSE grades including English and mathematics by ensuring that more of the teaching is consistently good or better through:
  - extending the range of styles used in lessons so that they meet the range of students' needs more fully
  - creating more opportunities for students' self-and peer-assessment
  - marking students' work more clearly so that they know how to improve their work.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Achievement is good. The 2009 unvalidated GCSE results show a significant rise in five or more A\* to C grades. Attainment targets set for the school's specialist subjects of mathematics and computing were met. Students' attainment on entry was generally below average and their results represent good progress overall. It also reflects the school's adjustments to the curriculum so that it maximises students' opportunities to gain relevant qualifications and increase their enjoyment. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics has been average over the last three years. Challenging targets have been set for the next year and the school's monitoring of current progress indicates that the majority of students are well on track. In the large majority of lessons observed during this inspection, students were judged to be making good and sometimes outstanding progress. Over recent years, students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have made exceptional progress, as have students identified as gifted and talented. This trend is being sustained because of careful, targeted support and a very secure understanding of these students' varied needs, leading to high enjoyment of learning.

Students learn in a supportive and inclusive environment where they feel safe and valued as individuals. They are proud of the school and enjoy taking part in the many activities it has to offer. They say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare. They are confident that any instances would be dealt with effectively. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students respond courteously to their peers, staff and visitors to the school. Where more challenging behaviour exists it is dealt with positively and effectively by the school, with the result that the students concerned often go on to make good progress. Students have a proper regard for safety and a good awareness of risks to their personal health and well-being. High levels of participation in physical activity and a clear knowledge of potential risks to personal safety enable the great majority of students to adopt and develop a strong sense of a healthy lifestyle. Members of the elected school council take great pride in their responsibilities. They feel that their suggestions and opinions are listened to and acted upon. Students respond well to the

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opportunities to take responsibility and make a good contribution to the community through a wide range of initiatives, including the eco-schools group which also helps to develop students' understanding about sustainability. Students' preparation for future economic well-being is good because of their competent skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Typically, where teaching is most effective, students make good or better progress because teachers have high expectations and use their strong subject knowledge to enthuse students and involve them in their own learning. Students are knowledgeable about their targets and keen to achieve them. There is a brisk pace and students particularly enjoy, and engage with, a practical, active approach to learning. Inspectors saw very good examples of oral and written assessment, such as effective use of questioning to monitor and sustain progress and marking which followed the school assessment policy. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Although most teachers plan comprehensively to meet the needs of all students, in

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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some of the lessons seen the planning was brief, the quality of assessment and marking was inconsistent and opportunities were missed to extend the more able students.

The curriculum is good. At Key Stage 4, it is flexible, offering a range of pathways to meet students' needs. A highly personalised occupational pathway is offered to a small group of students which has led to much improved motivation, achievement and attendance. In partnership with other local schools, three diploma subjects are offered, in addition to a wide range of vocational subjects within the school's curriculum. This is contributing to good achievement. The specialist school status has enabled enhanced provision for mathematics and ICT, benefiting students at the school and, more widely, those in partner primary schools. Carefully planned provision for students identified as gifted and talented enables them to make outstanding progress. There are a wide range of extra-curricular activities that take place after school and at lunchtime, particularly in sport and participation rates are good. Many students also take up the opportunity to contribute to school productions.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Staff demonstrate strong, caring attitudes and students receive excellent personal support and guidance, both at times of transition and when facing challenging circumstances. Systems to monitor students' progress and well-being are highly effective, including for those students who experience difficulties in learning and those who are potentially vulnerable. Very individual attention given to them is particularly commented on by very many parents who appreciate the support given by staff. Unrelenting efforts, including the use of external support, have resulted in reducing the rate of persistent absentees from 9% in 2007 to 2% in 2009. Students receive exceptional guidance in their future choices and careers.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher, ably supported by members of the senior leadership team, provide outstanding leadership. Their drive for improvement is characterised by a strong sense of purpose which puts students' achievement and well-being at the core of the school's work. The systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is good because it has ensured that improvement is embedded and not led by quick fix solutions. The governing body provides outstanding leadership by providing direction and finely judged support and challenge. They are very well informed through their personal visits and

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engagement with students, parents and staff, including subject leaders. This results in governors' active involvement in school improvement planning and evaluation which are robust, based on rigorous monitoring and incisive analysis.

There is a highly positive relationship with most groups of parents, based on good engagement and willingness to act on the findings from consultations. Partnership with other providers, such as other schools and educational welfare services, is good. Concerted action to promote equality of opportunity and removing barriers has resulted in significantly improved boys' attainment and progress so that it is broadly in line with that of the girls. Safeguarding procedures are robust and there are effective systems in place to ensure students' safety. There is a very good understanding of the community's needs and careful auditing of what the school does to promote community cohesion has led to a detailed plan of action which is implemented well. The extended school provision also helps to promote good community cohesion. Given the students' good achievement, the school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Results in examinations at the end of Year 13 are average and this represents good achievement from students' below average starting points. Provision is good and students have high aspirations. They are keen to contribute to the school, for example through the successful mentoring and prefect system and act as good role models for younger students. Contribution to the local community is good, particularly through activities to support local primary schools.



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A well-planned variety of curriculum pathways, including vocational courses, meet students' needs and aspirations well. Attendance and punctuality are good and a very large majority of students continue to further or higher education. Students' good progress is brought about by good teaching that is interesting and encourages students to think. Teachers challenge students suitably through stretching targets and reviewing progress towards these on a regular basis. Leadership and management are good. There is clarity of purpose and what needs to be improved further because of a strong focus on self-evaluation and accurate planning to tackle key areas of weakness, as well as to build on existing strengths. Robust plans are being implemented to raise standards at AS level and to secure higher retention rates for the less academic courses.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Boarding provision

The quality of the boarding provision is good. The key national minimum standards are met. The four recommendations set at the school's last welfare inspection are all met. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Boarders benefit from living in a school where the staff team are committed to providing individualised care and support. Staff fully understand the need to promote social inclusion and to challenge any form of discrimination.

The management of boarding provision assumes an important position within the school. There is a very strong commitment to the development of boarding as an integral part of the continuing provision made by De Aston. Boarding house staff are clear about established lines of communication and accountability. The head of boarding is responsible for monitoring the welfare of the boarding house and is able to regularly share concerns and achievements with the head teacher. This demonstrates the school's deep commitment to caring for boarders.

Boarders' medical needs are safely met. They have access to good quality medical treatment and first aid. Consent for medication and first aid is sought from parents and guardians on an appropriately detailed consent form. The school has a range of effective policies and procedures, and records are well maintained by boarding staff. Boarders have access to information and guidance with regard to health and social issues in age-appropriate formats. These areas are also addressed formally through the school's curriculum helping boarders to gain a good awareness of healthy living.

Boarders receive a good quality catering provision. Some boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the food provided stating that they felt the food has 'no flavour'.

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Although all boarders acknowledged that the food is healthy. There are children from many differing nationalities and cultures residing in boarding. Menus reflect a reasonable range of foods. However, the school is not overtly maximising on opportunities to celebrate the full width and breadth of cultural foods in practise.

The systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of students are effective. Boarders commented that they 'feel safe'. The school uses closed circuit television cameras to help deter unwanted visitors and safeguard boarders' welfare. A couple of boarders said they are sensitive about positioning of one of the cameras. There are no child protection concerns with regard to boarding since the last inspection. Boarders confirm that bullying is not an issue within the school and that staff act quickly on any information that bullying might be taking place. Staff receive appropriate child protection and safeguarding training. There is a vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders. This ensures that boarders' welfare is fully protected.

The school provides good induction training for all new boarding staff. Induction training is also extended to catering staff who are employed by an external company. These contracted staff members are included in the school's refresher training, for example, child protection. However, if such training is cancelled systems are not robust enough to ensure that important policies are shared with such staff quickly. This has the potential to delay these staff members taking prompt action. Expectations of staff are outlined in job descriptions and reinforced by good access to the school's detailed policies on boarding practice. Job descriptions accurately reflect the high expectations the school has from its boarding staff.

The school provides an adequate range of boarding accommodation. There is a refurbishment and redecoration plan in place. However, some timescales have not been met and as a result, accommodation is seen by boarders as only reaching a satisfactory standard. The communal toilets and washing provision provides boarders with appropriate levels of privacy.

The school successfully engages boarders to contribute to the operation of boarding. Boarders are able to move into, and leave the school, in a planned and sensitive manner. They are also able to keep regular contact with their family and friends whilst sleeping at the school.

Boarders receive effective and dynamic individualised support when they need it. The school values both the spiritual and moral development of each boarder, fostering supportive and caring relationships. Boarders are clear about which member of staff they can go to for personal support and their comments include, 'the best thing about De Aston is the atmosphere. They prepare us well for moving on.'

**National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care**

- Develop the range of meals provided to boarders ensuring that the differing cultures are well catered for (NMS 24.1).
- Consider reviewing where the CCTV cameras are placed (NMS 41.7).
- Ensure the refurbishment and redecoration plan for the boarding house continues (NMS 40.1).

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- Review the systems for induction training so that new contract staff such as catering staff, are promptly made aware of important school policies (NMS 34.4).

*This is the grade for the boarding provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the boarding provision</b>	<b>2</b>
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## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers view the school as doing a good job overall. They are particularly happy with what their children experience and agree that they enjoy school. The very large majority of parents agree that school keeps children safe. There is confidence in the quality of teaching and learning and in the school being led and managed effectively. A number of parents commented that their decision to send their child or children to De Aston through choice, having to travel up to 20 miles each way daily, was well judged because of the school's good or better provision. A very small minority of parents responded negatively to some aspects of the school's provision, feeling particularly that their suggestions and concerns are not always taken into account and unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. Inspectors considered these issues and concluded that, on balance, the school has sought to seek parents' suggestions and where possible to accommodate them. The questionnaire sampling students' views and discussions with groups of students indicate that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with effectively.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at De Aston school to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 233 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1057 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	32	133	57	17	7	5	2
The school keeps my child safe	74	32	134	58	20	9	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	73	31	127	55	19	8	8	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	29	120	52	26	11	11	5
The teaching is good at this school	53	23	140	60	17	7	7	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	18	129	55	33	14	12	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	15	138	59	37	16	8	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	65	28	124	53	19	8	12	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	62	27	127	55	22	9	12	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	18	130	56	30	13	15	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	14	133	57	27	12	16	7
The school is led and managed effectively	56	24	132	57	21	9	11	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	31	125	54	15	6	15	6

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



26 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of De Aston School, Willingham Road, Market Rasen, LN8 3RF

I would like to thank you all for being kind and helpful when we visited to inspect your school recently. After looking at the school's work and the questionnaires completed by you and your parents we reached conclusions which I would like to share with you.

Yours is a good school, including the sixth form. The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors are impressive in ensuring that all staff share the common purpose of raising standards and improving your learning further. Their drive for improvement is seen in the most recent GCSE results which reflect a continuing, rising trend. Your progress in learning is now good and this represents good achievement.

One of you wrote in the questionnaire response, 'I am happy at my school and the teachers take an interest in my thoughts. Also, they are really friendly and make you feel really comfortable.' We agree that your care, guidance and support are outstanding. This also enables those of you who have special needs, including the gifted and talented, to make outstanding progress. The great many of you like the new school uniform and appreciate staff seeking your views about this and other matters. You make other good contributions to school life, for example through the school council, and the local community. We judged your behaviour to be good and the offer of a flexible curriculum has raised motivation, increased your engagement and interest and widened the range of qualifications you obtain. You clearly enjoy school, as reflected in your above average attendance, good punctuality and participation in a range of extra-curricular activities. You, including those of you who are boarders, told us that you feel safe and there is always someone you can turn to for help.

The quality of teaching is good overall. To improve further, we have asked the senior leaders to ensure that even more of you gain higher grades in GCSE subjects including English and mathematics. You can help by rising to the challenges teachers set. To this end, we have asked that teaching should involve you more consistently in learning, for example through self-and peer-assessment, and that that teachers' marking should give you clear guidance on how to improve your work. We are confident that your school will continue to improve and wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala

Her Majesty's Inspector



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