

# Lincoln the Sincil School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131277
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	341122
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gina White HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr N Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Parkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 May 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with a governor, staff, students, and a parent. They observed the school's work, and looked at: the school's development plan, safeguarding policies and documentation, tracking of students' progress, students' books assessment records and case studies, the schools data on parent views and minutes of governors' meetings. They also analysed the seven parental and 43 pupil questionnaires received.

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

- the quality of students' learning and their progress, particularly the most able students and children in care
- how effectively the curriculum is designed to meet the needs, interests and aspirations of all students
- the impact of support and intervention on students' progress, independence in managing their own behaviour and in preparing them to take the next steps in their education, employment and training
- progress in developing longer term school development plans
- governors' awareness of their responsibilities and the progress made in recruiting a full complement of governors

## Information about the school

The school provides education and support for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Almost all are White British. Most students join the school in Year 7, with small numbers of students joining at different ages and stages in their school career, some having had previously negative experiences of education. Students mostly come from the city of Lincoln, but many travel in daily from towns and villages across a wide area of Lincolnshire. Well above average numbers are entitled to free school meals. A small number of students are in public care. The school operates an extended day, starting with a breakfast club and continuing after lessons with a range of activities, mainly away from the school site. Since its opening in 2006, and the last inspection, pupil numbers and staffing has rapidly increased. The school has awards for Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Sportsmark, Basic Skills and Artsmark. The school gained specialist status as a sports college in July 2009.

**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?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

Sincil provides a satisfactory quality of education. An outstanding level of personal care, guidance and support and good curriculum provision underpin students' enjoyment of school and their good personal development. Students know who to turn to if they have concerns and know they can trust the staff to support them.

Many students join the school having experienced significant difficulties, often resulting in high absence, low attainment and poor self-esteem. The calm and supportive ethos, high expectations of behaviour and well embedded systems of rewards provide students with the structure and security they need to engage in learning.

Students' attendance, behaviour and attainment improve in response to the individualised attention they receive. Although students' attainment remains low overall, the majority of students leaving school in 2009 gained basic qualifications in physical education, mathematics, science and literacy. The school is beginning to use its data to identify individual students who are not making the progress the school expects in their learning. Support and intervention are well targeted to meet their needs, and systems for tracking and monitoring students' individual progress show notable success for some students in some subjects. Most students are making at least satisfactory progress in their learning over time and some make good progress. The school has yet to implement its plans to analyse the impact of its work on groups of students, or students as a whole, to ensure good progress is maintained for all.

Students enjoy the rich opportunities provided by the curriculum to undertake a wide range of activities. They say the resources for learning, physical education activities, trips and visits are the best things about their school and enable them to do things they would not otherwise have an opportunity to do. Students are well supported with advice and guidance to enable them to make choices about their futures and the subjects they will study.

The headteacher and senior leaders have led the school well through a period of rapid change as it has developed to become an established school. Shared ambition for all students to achieve highly and to remove barriers to their learning is evident throughout the staff team. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. Since the last inspection, communication with parents and the engagement of students in learning has been strengthened. Regular weekly telephone calls keep parents updated on the progress their child is making. Students and parents hold extremely positive views about the school. The care and support provided for the most vulnerable students is excellent and well managed. Arrangements for safeguarding are good and governors have good oversight of them. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory: effective tracking and

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monitoring of students' attendance and behaviour are firmly established. The monitoring of teaching by middle leaders does not focus sufficiently on the impact it has on students' learning. The governing body is supportive of the school, although its impact on the direction and work of the school is underdeveloped and does not comply fully with statutory duties.

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

- Make sure the impact of its work on groups of students and students as a whole is analysed rigorously to ensure all make good progress
- Ensure middle leaders adopt consistent practices in monitoring teaching and the impact it has on students' learning and progress.
- Ensure governors receive training to enable them to fully meet their statutory responsibilities and to play their part in evaluating the impact of the schools' work and improvement planning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students are keen to learn from a wide range of new experiences. They make satisfactory progress in their learning and good progress in their personal development. Attainment on entry is well below the national average for the majority of students and remains so. A small minority of students in all years join with attainment broadly in line with their age. Progress in lessons is mostly good for the lowest attaining students as a result of one to one support, but that of higher attaining students was more variable and progress is satisfactory overall. School data on students' current performance show that they make rapid gains in their learning when they first enter the school. The momentum generally is not sustained and their progress over time slows to satisfactory. The exceptions to this are in physical education and information and communication technology, where all students continue to make good progress. Currently performance data are not analysed in sufficient detail to explore the reasons.

Students feel safe from bullying in school. They say the little that goes on is always dealt with speedily. Students have a good understanding of the risks associated with strangers, being out at night and internet and mobile phones. The majority of students need and receive support to improve their health: a few students smoke or take drugs and drink out of school. Most respond well to school guidance and are trying hard to improve. Students have a good understanding of the health risks of taking drugs. Good participation in a wide range of physical activities and well above average take-up of healthy school meals contribute well to their improving levels of fitness.

Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Students can talk about their feelings and understand the need for good behaviour. They show a good understanding of what constitutes racist behaviour and why racism is wrong. Students

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learn about other cultures but have little experience of engaging with people from other cultures. Effective advice and guidance play a key role in the majority of students continuing in education, employment and training when they leave school. Outdoor activities and junior sports leaders provide useful opportunities for students to work collaboratively and to lead. Students' attendance is improving from a low base. The majority of students are making good efforts, including some persistent absentees. The school is successfully engaging them in learning through study support materials, work placement and phased returns. Despite the school's best efforts attendance remains low.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<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>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers and support staff know students well. They form positive relationships with students. The use of reward points and encouragement for students to evaluate briefly their own behaviour and achievement is a consistent and positive feature of all lessons. Small class sizes and high levels of support enable most students to complete the tasks. Effective planning of English and mathematics lessons is well focused on the gaps 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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students' previous skills and tackles misconceptions in their learning. Students settle quickly to their work, follow instructions and respond to teachers' questioning. Where teaching is effective, a wide range of questioning and teaching strategies, including effective use of resources such as games, are used well to actively involve them in learning. This promotes faster progress. Higher ability students are challenged effectively in physical education, science and photography. The over use of worksheets and teacher direction slowed the pace of learning and constrained opportunities for students, particularly middle and higher attainers, to respond creatively. Such weaker features were present in a small proportion of lessons and in the scrutiny of students' work. The impact of assessment on students' long-term progress is satisfactory.

The school's specialist sports status is firmly embedded in the breadth of sporting activities. Partnership, particularly with employers and specialist providers, is well reflected in the wide ranging provision of activities, courses and work placement. The extended day enables students to participate, and take-up of all the school offers is high. Specialist accommodation for the curriculum is first rate and enhanced by extensive use of the local community. Extra-curricular opportunities provide experiences to work together in teams, for example to race go-karts, become cadet fire fighters and lead teams. Together with opportunities to exercise choice and make decisions to personalise their learning, they make a positive contribution to students' preparation for work and further training. The curriculum is limited in the provision of enterprise opportunities but the school plans to introduce this element. Personal social and health education covers a relevant range of topics, including sex and relationships education and advice. Opportunities for students to gain awards and accreditation are well integrated into the curriculum and contribute effectively to students' learning needs.

Care, guidance and support are of the highest quality. Students have a high level of trust in staff and are confident to ask for support. Care and support meet the needs of individuals on a day-to-day basis and during periods of crises. Partnership work with a range of agencies contributes effectively to sustain the engagement of vulnerable students in learning. Home visits, family residentials and access to counselling are enormously valued and contribute effectively to reducing exclusions, improving attendance and engaging students in learning. Leadership of care, guidance and support is exemplary.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<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?**

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The drive for further improvement is decisively led by the headteacher and senior staff. Effective systems are in place to monitor the progress students make to improve their behaviour, attendance and their welfare needs. The school is at early stages in applying the same level of sophistication and consistency to monitoring and evaluating students' academic progress. Recently appointed middle leaders are beginning to get to grips with their new roles. Suitable plans are in place to use the best practice in physical education to support new middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating students' progress towards their targets. The school successfully promoted equality of opportunity. It has a deep understanding of every individual and is closing gaps in students' behaviour, attendance and achievement from a low base. Support meets the needs of children in care and actions to remove barriers to their learning enable them to become fully involved in the extensive curriculum provision.

Safeguarding procedures are effective. Governors have a good oversight of safeguarding. Thorough action is taken to ensure students are safe when taking part in the wide range of off-site activities. Procedures are in place to ensure that adults coming into contact with students are suitable to do so.

The chair of governors provides much support for the school and committees and structures are well established. The school continues to struggle to recruit governors. Governance is unsatisfactory because its impact on the direction and work of the school is underdeveloped and the governing body does not comply fully with statutory duties. Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the needs of the local community informed through analysis of data and direct contact with neighbourhood groups. Evidence of community contributions outside the school is limited. Nevertheless, students are reaching out through community service to improve the quality of life for elderly residents and developing orienteering trails to improve local facilities for young people.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>4</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>3</b>



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**The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money**

**3**

## Views of parents and carers

Only seven parents and carers responded to Ofsted's questionnaire and gave their views on the school. However, the school has plenty of evidence of the parents' levels of satisfaction. It is clear that parents are happy overall with the experiences their children have at the school. They hold highly positive views of the school and appreciate the way they are kept informed about their child's progress, and the effectiveness with which the school deals with behaviour. Two parents thought their children were not making enough progress. Inspectors found that students' progress is satisfactory rather than good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sincil 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 seven completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 63 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	14	4	57	2	29	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	3	43	4	57	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	86	1	14	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	29	3	43	2	29	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	43	4	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	29	5	71	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
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)	1	14	6	86	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	43	4	57	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	86	1	14	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	71	2	29	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	71	2	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	71	2	29	0	0	0	0

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.**



15 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Lincoln The Sincil School, Lincoln, LN5 8EW

Thank you for your help with the inspection. We enjoyed meeting you and learning about your school. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found.

Sincil is a satisfactory school which cares for you exceptionally well. Most of you seemed to enjoy your work, feel safe and have someone you can talk to if you are upset or worried. You told us that the curriculum and the sports activities, trips and visits are the features you like the most. All of you are making progress to improve your attendance, behaviour and attainment and do so quickly in physical education and information and communication technology. We, and the school, think all of you could make faster progress in your other subjects too.

We have asked the staff to keep a closer eye on how well you are doing to help more of you make good progress in your learning by:

- checking how well different groups of you are doing to find out what else they can do to improve the progress. You can help by letting your teacher know if the work you are given is easy or difficult
- making sure staff adopt the same practices when they observe lessons to look closely at the difference it makes to your learning and progress.
- making sure governors receive training to help them to fully meet their responsibilities and to help them to become more involved in making decisions and plans to make the school even better.

Good luck in all you do and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gina White HMI

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