

Skegness Grammar School

Vernon Road, Skegness, Lincolnshire PE25 2QS

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors have not ensured that the school has maintained the high standards that inspectors found at the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching is not good enough across the school to ensure that all pupils make consistently strong progress.
- The most able pupils do not make as much progress as they should across a range of subjects.
- The key stage 3 curriculum does not enable the most able pupils to make the progress that they should in preparation for key stage 4.
- Senior leaders of the trust of which the school is a member have been too slow to hold the school's leaders to account for the quality of the school's provision.
- Students in the sixth form do not make consistently strong progress because the quality of teaching is too variable.
- Not all teachers consistently use the school's assessment policy when marking pupils' work.
- Until recently, the training that teachers receive has not focused well enough on the school's priorities, including the progress of the most able pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher has a precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The interim headteacher has ensured that leaders are taking rapid action to resolve the weaker aspects of the school.
- The middle ability pupils make strong progress.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils have strong relationships with each other and with staff.
- Disadvantaged pupils, pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress.
- Staff work closely with each other to keep pupils safe and to learn to be safe.
- There is a wide range of enrichment activities that pupils engage with well.
- Attendance at the school is in line with national levels.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all subject leaders, including those who are new to the role, receive appropriate support to ensure that they are fully effective in leading their subject area
 - the key stage 3 curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including the most able, to enable them to make good progress
 - all teachers mark books in line with the school's assessment policy
 - leaders and governors embed the recent changes that they have made to the school's provision, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and to the training that staff access.
- Improve the quality of teaching to raise the achievement of the most able pupils by ensuring that all teachers:
 - consistently use information about these pupils' prior attainment and learning when planning learning activities
 - have suitably high expectations of the level of achievement that these pupils are capable of
 - set these pupils activities that provide them with appropriate levels of challenge that help them to make at least good progress.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form by ensuring that all teachers plan learning activities that help students, including the most able, to make at least good progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors have not maintained or built on the high standards that inspectors found at the last inspection.
- Senior leaders have not taken sufficient action to resolve the areas for improvement that inspectors identified at the last inspection. For example, they have not ensured that the most able pupils make consistently strong progress.
- Leaders of the multi-academy trust, of which the school is a member, have been too slow in challenging the school's leaders about the quality of the school's provision. Although trust leaders now provide appropriate challenge and support, this is very recent. Consequently, the trust has not ensured that, over time, the quality of the school's provision is such that the pupils, particularly the most able, make at least the progress they should.
- The key stage 3 curriculum does not enable the most able pupils to make the progress that they should in preparation for their GCSE studies in Year 10. This is because the curriculum does not provide these pupils with sufficient opportunities to deepen their understanding across a range of subjects.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that teachers consistently use the school's assessment policy when marking pupils' work. As a result, pupils, including the most able, do not receive the guidance that they need to help them become secure in their learning.
- The interim headteacher has rapidly gained a precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has enabled her to undertake wide-ranging actions to resolve the school's weaknesses. She has been quick to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can accomplish, particularly the most able.
- The interim headteacher has appointed a team of committed senior leaders to help to implement the necessary improvements. Staff are greatly appreciative of this new, energetic leadership. As one member of staff remarked, 'It's a breath of fresh air.'
- A key development has been the introduction of new systems by which the senior leaders check the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. These systems are enabling senior leaders to make sharper judgements of the quality of the school's provision. The systems are also allowing leaders to take effective action to introduce improvements where performance is below the new, raised expectations.
- Subject leaders now work closely with senior leaders to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their subject areas. As a result, these leaders have begun to have a more pivotal role in the drive to secure greater progress for the most able pupils. However, some of these subject leaders are new to their roles and currently lack the necessary experience to be fully effective in their positions of responsibility.
- Swift changes to the key stage 4 curriculum mean that the most able pupils are now able to study a wider range of more demanding GCSE subjects. For example, all pupils in the current Year 10 are studying all three science subjects.
- The training that staff receive is now more closely linked to the school's priorities. This is particularly the case in relation to the training that staff receive on teaching the most

able pupils effectively. However, leaders have only recently put this new training programme into place. It is too early to establish the impact of this training on improving the quality of teaching and the progress that the most able pupils make.

- Senior leaders closely monitor the attendance, welfare and progress of pupils who receive additional government funding, including the pupil premium. Leaders are quick to put into place any necessary support for disadvantaged pupils. They regularly review the impact of this support and adapt it as necessary. Because of this, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress, both in their learning and in their personal development.
- The leader who oversees the welfare of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities provides very effective support. She is quick to identify any additional needs that these pupils may have. In so doing, she is quick to ensure that they receive effective support. Consequently, these pupils make strong progress.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities effectively supports pupils in developing their skills within and beyond the curriculum. Pupils are able to take advantage of a range of sporting, musical and cultural activities. Engagement in these activities is high.
- Pupils receive effective opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Through external visits, the curriculum and assemblies, pupils are able to consider other cultures, religions and beliefs. In an assembly to mark International Languages Day, inspectors observed pupils learning about the different cultures and languages of other countries.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They understand the issues in the local area that may affect people's opinions. Pupils took part in a mock election at the school, reinforcing their understanding of the freedom of speech. Pupils recognise the need to respect all people, including those who are different from them.

Governance of the school

- Members of the academy improvement board (AIB) have undertaken a full and frank review of the quality of the school's provision. This has included an external organisation's review of the school.
- This comprehensive and detailed consideration of the school's current performance means that members of the AIB have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know what needs to happen to ensure that all pupils make consistently strong progress.
- Members of the AIB regularly meet and provide strong challenge to the senior leaders, particularly in relation to the actions that the leaders are taking to improve the progress that the most able pupils make. Members of the AIB are realistic in their understanding that, while improvements are under way, there is still much to do.
- The chair of the AIB regularly visits the school, during which time he meets with leaders, visits lessons and speaks with pupils. These activities help him to check the accuracy of the information that senior leaders provide the AIB. His own experience within education ensures that he can identify where further improvement is necessary.
- Members of the AIB are fully aware of their responsibilities to safeguard the pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding leaders are sensitive to the needs of their pupils. When they have a concern about pupils' welfare, leaders provide effective support. They work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support that they need.
- Safeguarding leaders are quick to identify any issues in the local area that may affect their pupils' well-being. They take effective action to bring such issues to the attention of the staff and the pupils. This enables pupils to know how to keep themselves safe.
- Records of safeguarding concerns are detailed. They ensure that all leaders know the support that pupils who are experiencing difficulties have received. The records show the speed with which safeguarding leaders respond to safeguarding concerns, including the follow-up work that they undertake to check on pupils' welfare.
- All staff receive regular safeguarding training. They have a clear understanding of their duties in relation to keeping pupils safe. They know the action that they should take when they have a concern about a pupil's welfare.
- Those pupils whom inspectors met said that they feel safe at the school. They said that there was someone that they could speak with if they have a concern. They are confident that adults will listen to them and take effective action to support them.
- Almost all the pupils and parents who expressed a view through the online surveys agreed that the school is effective in keeping pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching across the school to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, make consistently strong progress.
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' prior attainment and learning well enough when planning learning activities. Consequently, pupils receive work that is not sufficiently challenging. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- Not all teachers use questioning effectively to explore pupils' understanding fully. Where this is the case, pupils are not able to deepen their understanding.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of the quality and quantity of work that the most able pupils can achieve. Where this is the case, the most able pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. However, they do not use this well enough to ensure that pupils, particularly the most able, make consistently strong progress.
- Where learning is more effective, teachers provide challenging work that pupils are able to engage with well. The work stimulates pupils' interest and allows them to explore their understanding fully. Teachers ask carefully targeted questions to ensure that pupils are secure in their learning. In so doing, teachers provide effective support to those pupils whose understanding is less secure and more challenging work to those who are ready to move on.

- There are strong relationships between teachers and pupils. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons, even when the work they are completing is not challenging enough.
- Teachers promote pupils' numeracy and communication skills well. Where appropriate, pupils receive close support to help them to become secure in these skills.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read. They check that pupils are reading suitably challenging books. The literacy leader has ensured that the books that the trust has insisted that the school should make available are appropriate to the pupils' levels of ability.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have very strong relationships with each other, both within and across the different year groups. This is partly due to the fact that pupils are members of form groups that include pupils from across Years 7 to 11. This encourages pupils to support each other. Inspectors saw many examples of this support.
- Pupils receive wide-ranging opportunities to learn how to be safe and how to lead healthy lives. These opportunities include considering the negative effects of alcohol and drugs, and the importance of keeping safe while living near the sea.
- Pupils are secure in their knowledge of different types of bullying, including physical, homophobic and cyber bullying. They know how to stay safe online.
- Pupils said that bullying is very rare. They said that when it does happen, staff are quick to deal with it. Those parents and staff who expressed a view agreed with this. The school's records confirm that there are few incidents of bullying.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of the need to treat all people with respect. This includes people who are different from them, including in the opinions that they hold.
- Pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance that prepares them well for their next steps. Pupils receive information about different academic and work-related training opportunities that they can progress to when they leave the school.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They want to achieve well. However, the inconsistency with which teachers set suitably challenging work limits the chances that pupils, particularly the most able, have of making the strong progress of which they are capable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school.
- Pupils conduct themselves in an orderly fashion, both between lessons and during social time. This includes in those areas of the school where the corridors are narrow.

- Staff and sixth-form students model the behaviour that the school's leaders expect of all of the pupils well. As a result, there are very few incidents of poor behaviour, including behaviour that may result in pupils receiving an exclusion from the school.
- Attendance at the school is in line with national levels. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from the school is rapidly reducing due to the close support that these pupils receive.
- Leaders have taken effective action to reduce the proportion of pupils who are late to school in the morning. Pupils' punctuality to school this year has rapidly improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The most able pupils across all year groups do not make as much progress as they should across a range of subjects. This is because teachers do not set them suitably challenging work.
- In most year groups, girls make strong progress in a range of subjects. In many of these subjects, boys' progress is not as strong.
- Across most year groups, pupils make weak progress in French and in German.
- The progress that pupils in Year 11 in 2017 made in their GCSE studies was broadly average. The most able pupils did not make the progress that they should across a range of subjects, including business studies, geography, music and product design.
- The school's own performance information indicates that current Year 11 pupils are not making as much progress as they should across a range of subjects. Those books that inspectors looked at confirmed this to be the case, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Pupils across all year groups make strong progress in English and in mathematics, including those pupils who were in Year 11 last academic year. However, in the lower years, pupils' progress in mathematics is stronger than in English.
- Attainment in the sciences at GCSE in 2017 was much stronger than it was previously. This was particularly the case for the most able pupils who studied biology and physics. However, their attainment in chemistry was not high enough.
- The middle ability pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects across most year groups. On many occasions, they make much stronger progress than the most able pupils. This is because the middle ability pupils receive much closer support and appropriately challenging work from their teachers.
- Disadvantaged pupils, pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress. This is due to the close support that they receive from staff, to support them both in their progress and in their personal development.
- The proportion of pupils who successfully move on to places of further education or training at the end of year 11 is well above national levels. At the end of the last academic year, there were no pupils who did not progress to some form of education or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching has not been good enough across all subjects to ensure that students, including the most able, make good progress.
- While students may attain highly, they do not make consistently strong progress across a range of subjects. This is particularly the case for the most able students.
- The new head of sixth form has a precise understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth-form provision. Working closely with the interim headteacher, he has taken effective action to resolve those areas in which performance is less strong. For example, he now undertakes visits to lessons to check the quality of teaching.
- Until recently, students have received limited opportunities to undertake work experience. Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that this is not the case for current Year 12 students.
- Students receive impartial careers advice and guidance that prepares them well for their next steps at the end of Year 13. The proportion of students who leave to move to higher education courses or employment with training is well above national levels.
- Attendance at the sixth form is high.
- The proportion of students who stay on into Year 13 is very high. This is due to the close support, advice and guidance that the students receive before they enter the sixth form and during their time in Year 12.
- Students know how to stay safe, including online.
- Students receive wide-ranging opportunities to undertake enrichment activities that extend their learning beyond the classroom. They also receive opportunities to act as role models for pupils lower down in the school. This is crucial to helping younger pupils to behave well and to form strong relationships with each other.
- Students who are not sufficiently secure in their communication or literacy skills, receive further support from their teachers. This support is effective in enabling the students to develop these skills well.
- The head of sixth form and other staff work closely to support students to make consistently strong progress in their personal development.
- Students learn how to lead healthy lives. This includes eating healthily, understanding risk and having positive relationships. Any students who have concerns or who are experiencing difficulties can access the full range of support that is available to pupils lower down in the school.

School details

Unique reference number	138757
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10031403

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	472
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	106
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Ross
Interim headteacher	Heather Scott
Telephone number	01754 610000
Website	http://www.sgs.lincs.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@skegnessgrammar.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Skegness Grammar School is smaller than average.
- The school is part of the David Ross Education Trust, which it joined in September 2012.

- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and of those who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, is well below average.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for its pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the school's senior leadership team and to governance.
- The headteacher who was at the school at the time of the last inspection left the school in March 2017. The interim headteacher who currently leads the school took up her post in April in a part-time capacity. She joined the school full time in June.
- Three members of the senior leadership team left the school at the end of the last academic year. The school has replaced them with two new senior leaders, both of whom started at the beginning of this academic year.
- A new head of sixth form started in his role at the beginning of this academic year.
- The AIB replaced the previous governing body in March 2017.
- The school has a number of boarding pupils who are based on a separate site and educated at the school. The boarding provision was not inspected as part of this visit.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards for pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 32 lessons. Inspectors undertook some of these visits with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed two assemblies and morning registration.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books, both within lessons and as a separate activity.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings, including with the interim headteacher, senior leaders, leaders responsible for safeguarding, the head of sixth form, the literacy and numeracy leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the assistant principal responsible for personal development and a selection of other staff.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with the chair of the AIB and with the academy improvement leader. The academy improvement leader is a senior leader of the trust who checks the quality of the school's provision.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the school day and during breaktime and lunchtime. During these occasions, inspectors spoke with pupils. Inspectors also met with pupils formally.
- Inspectors took into account the 36 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 32 responses to the free text service.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the 20 staff members and 14 pupils who responded to their respective surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, behaviour and attendance, achievement, the external review of the school's provision, governance and safeguarding. The lead inspector also checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.

Inspection team

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tanya Wiles	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Stevens	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Staley	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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