

# Cherry Willingham Community School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	120654
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327333
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Bob Drew

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	506
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Gareth Jones
Headteacher	Mr Edward Fitzpatrick
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 May 2006
School address	Croft Lane Cherry Willingham Lincoln LN3 4JP
Telephone number	01522 824250
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 20 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation form, performance data, the school improvement plan, its key policies and 84 parental questionnaires.

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

- how well teaching and leadership in science and mathematics are improving performance in those subjects
- how well gifted and talented pupils are provided for at both key stages
- whether students are reflective and are sufficiently aware of cultures other than their own in the United Kingdom
- whether the school has accurately evaluated its capacity for further improvement.

## Information about the school

The school is much smaller than average and draws most of its students from four villages to the east of Lincoln. The overwhelming majority of students are White British. Attainment on entry is a little below average in most years. The school has specialist college status for sport, mathematics and computing. It holds the ICT mark and Sportsmark awards and has high performing specialist school status. A small specialist unit for students with hearing impairment is housed in the school. The headteacher has been in post for one term.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

### Main findings

This is already a good school and it is improving. It is well led and managed. Senior staff and governors show a clear understanding of how it could be even more effective and recent beneficial changes show that they can turn planning into reality. The capacity for further improvement is therefore good.

Students enter the school with a wide range of literacy and numeracy skills, but a significant minority have lower than average scores in both. By the time they leave, however, students' standards are above average, reflecting sustained good teaching and positive attitudes to learning. The overall performance at GCSE in 2008 showed a marked rise in standards, with the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C passes well in excess of national levels. Students make especially strong progress in Years 10 and 11 where they find the curriculum attractive and well tailored to their needs. Several vocational courses have been added recently and these motivate students particularly well. The school has also extended its monitoring and intervention programme to cover the full range of students and now begins this in Year 9. Previous practice had been limited to underperforming candidates in Year 11 only. Targets for the current year are as high as those for 2008, with students largely on track to meet them. While gifted and talented students make satisfactory progress, fewer than might be expected gain A\* or A grades at GCSE and the school is right to seek to increase performance at this level.

Standards in English are slightly above average, while those in mathematics and science are a little below. Progress in mathematics and science is satisfactory but lags far behind the impressive gains made across the curriculum as a whole. This is because the quality of teaching and leadership in both are satisfactory rather than good, lacking the strong features found elsewhere.

Students are well behaved and mature. They feel safe and know how to adopt healthy lifestyles, and a great many contribute well to school life and to that of the wider community. They are well prepared for their future economic well-being. Most strikingly, they enjoy school and are happy to show enthusiasm both in lessons and around school. They have good links with schools and communities abroad whilst their awareness of minority ethnic cultures in the United Kingdom is satisfactory.

All aspects of provision are good. Teaching is effective overall: most lessons are good, a few are outstanding and a significant minority are satisfactory. The key

features of good and excellent teaching in the school are high pace and challenge for all students, with maximum scope for active involvement. Lessons which have an adequate impact are more likely to contain phases of modest pace, with students passive and the most able only partially challenged. All students enjoy a wide range of courses and extra-curricular activities. The sports and computing specialisms have a major beneficial impact on the school and the wider community, especially on other local schools.

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

- In mathematics and science, take urgent steps to establish good leadership and management so that 2010 GCSE results:
  - clearly exceed national averages for A\* to C passes
  - include at least 10% A\* to A passes.
- Transform the significant minority of teaching that is currently satisfactory to at least good quality by:
  - adopting in all lessons the strong pace, provision of challenging work for the most able, active involvement of students and effective marking seen in the best lessons
  - seeking to exceed the school's existing target of 80% of lessons with good or better teaching by the end of 2010.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Students make good progress. This is because teaching is effective and the school knows how to motivate young people and monitor their progress well. On entry to Year 7, some students have moderate weaknesses in reading and numeracy to overcome, but by the time they leave Year 11, their overall standards are significantly above national averages. Their progress is particularly strong in Key Stage 4. In the last two years, several changes have helped to raise standards and establish new approaches that can sustain improvement. For instance, Year 10 and 11 students have responded very positively to new vocational courses and obtained good results in 2008. The school also finds that their improved commitment to learning transfers to the rest of their studies. In addition, tracking systems, previously focused on borderline candidates in Year 11, now follow the progress of all students across Years 9 to 11. This is leading to earlier, more accurate intervention for many more students, enabling them to make better progress.

Standards in English are a little above average and they are well above average in several other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), drama, history, geography and Spanish. These strengths match the good quality of teaching and leadership in those areas. The school is aware that in mathematics and science, standards are lower than average and that progress is below the school's norms. Trends in performance do not yet indicate improvement. While the school's intake has fewer particularly able students than average, the proportion gaining A\* and A grades at GCSE is still lower than it should be. A small number of subjects enable their candidates to gain a fair share of these higher grades, but more do not. A major success of the school is that it helps students to enjoy their education.

Surveys, interviews and inspectors' observations suggest that this is the case for the overwhelming majority. This view is supported by above-average attendance. Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Quite often it is excellent. Students are mature, considerate and confident enough to joke with staff while still being respectful. There remains a small minority who can be slow to listen and sometimes boisterous. Any tendency towards disruptive behaviour in lessons is effectively dealt with and exclusion rates are low. Students know, and largely follow, the requirements to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Most choose healthy options in the canteen and participate in considerably more sport than is common. They contribute well to the school and the wider community. For instance, the 'buddying' system is very extensive and well organised, and large numbers are involved in Junior Sports Leadership and schemes for modern language students to help younger pupils. Charitable work is also significant, with collections for the Nomads Trust, Christmas 'shoebox appeal' and others.

Workplace skills are well developed. Although literacy and numeracy are broadly average, ICT skills are good and students have many other opportunities to develop work-place and financial understanding. For example, the Fair Trade Cooperative challenge is one of many enterprise challenges at which the school does very well in local and national competitions.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good overall. A small proportion is outstanding and a significant minority is satisfactory. Students are completely immersed in their learning when teaching is excellent. In an outstanding Year 8 Spanish lesson, they were actively engaged from start to finish, listened intently to their peers and praised each other's good pronunciation or turn of phrase. High-level thinking took place as

<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

they were prompted to resolve linguistic problems themselves. This stemmed from superb pace, challenge for all abilities, the teacher's skill at making learning fun and her insistence on nothing but the highest standards of work and behaviour. Many good lessons show similar features. Good relationships are the norm; students come ready to learn and imaginative strategies are used to select students to answer questions. Teachers show good subject knowledge and, in well-taught lessons, marking is regular, focused and suggests ways to improve.

Where teaching and learning are less effective, the pace is far slower than in the best practice. Students behave and stay on task, but they cover far less ground and there is much less enjoyment. Challenge for able students is limited or appears too late in the lesson and marking is inconsistent.

Assessment practice is satisfactory. The understanding and use of medium- to long-term targets are good, which has helped to raise standards significantly. Students know their levels or grades, and their progress towards them is monitored regularly. Inconsistency in day-to-day assessment exists between subjects and within departments. There is some excellent practice, for instance, in history and geography, but too much that is irregular and perfunctory in others, particularly in mathematics and science.

The curriculum enables students, including those with learning difficulties, to make good progress. The school is rightly keen to update its Key Stage 3 provision, but has recently made major improvements in Years 10 and 11. More vocational subjects have been introduced since the last inspection and their beneficial impact is marked. The programme of enrichment activities is excellent and plays a big part in students' enjoyment of school as they grow in confidence and learn teamwork skills. The programme includes off-timetable days for specific projects, high-calibre opportunities for some, such as the Lincolnshire Young Journalist Academy, and scope for mass participation, in, for instance, extra-curricular sport. There are many good links with other schools and colleges to give students access to additional courses and facilities.

The school cares for, guides and supports students well. Risk assessments are carried out wherever required. Procedures to promote high attendance work well. Vulnerable children are very well supported. Students say that they feel safe and they refer to the buddying system, swift resolution of problems and the fact that learning support assistants provide a debrief at the end of every day for some students to improve self-esteem. There are several valuable links with primary schools, and the school is working hard, with some immediate benefits, to make these more extensive and substantial.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school has good leadership and management and this reveals itself in the academic and personal success students enjoy. Senior leaders in particular set high standards and are ambitious for the school. The recently appointed headteacher has taken this further by galvanising colleagues into accepting fresh challenges. His initial impact has been significant, bringing more staff into leadership roles and sharpening the focus of areas for improvement. The full impact of recent measures has yet to be seen, but the capacity for improvement, already good, is strengthening. The governing body supports and challenges the school well and enjoys a particularly good working relationship with senior leaders. There is effective leadership in several subjects, including the school's sports and computing specialisms. Both make a major contribution to their own students' achievement and to the wider community as a result. The leadership of mathematics and science allows students to make broadly satisfactory progress, but planning for improvement lacks challenge, rigour and impact.

The school is good at working in partnership with others and its links with secondary schools and colleges involves video conferencing, an expanded curriculum, scope for some staff to teach A-level courses and many other benefits. Local community cohesion is good and there is a wide range of international links that help students to understand global issues and the contrast in living conditions around the world. There is less awareness at national level of the minority ethnic cultures which form an established part of modern British society. All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.

### *These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Views of parents and carers

Very positive views of the school were expressed. The great majority of parents and carers thought the school helped their children enjoy school and make good progress. They believed that behaviour and leadership and management are good. Several took the opportunity to lavish great praise on how well their child had settled



at this school and to congratulate it on its sports provision. A very small minority recorded anxiety about two issues, namely behaviour and the standards reached by able students. They hoped the new headteacher would deal effectively with these. Inspectors judged that behaviour and attitudes are already good by national standards, but note that the new headteacher has raised expectations even further. Inspectors agree that more challenge is needed for able students. The school has made this part of its revised action plan and it is an area for improvement in this report.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cherry Willingham Community School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 84 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 370 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	34	6	2

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
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.



8 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Cherry Willingham Community School, Lincoln, LN3 4JP

Thank you for your welcome when my team recently came to inspect your school. You spoke highly of the school and your parents' questionnaires gave it strong support. We believe you are right to be so positive, because we judge it to be a good school and one that is improving.

We were pleased to find that you:

- reach above average standards
- make good overall progress
- enjoy school
- have good teaching and sometimes outstanding lessons
- have an imaginative range of courses, especially in Years 10 and 11
- take the opportunities outside lessons to be involved in sport, music, journalism and many other activities
- behave well and are good at looking out for each other and contributing to the school
- say you feel safe in school and are free from harassment or bullying
- have strong clear leadership from the headteacher and senior staff.

If the school is to improve even more it needs to make sure that:

- the science and mathematics departments operate more successfully, leading to higher standards in both subjects
- satisfactory lessons become good ones because teachers adopt the things inspectors saw in the best lessons: lively pace, active involvement of students, challenging work for all abilities and regular, helpful marking.

Best wishes for the rest of your time at Cherry Willingham.

Yours faithfully

Bob Drew  
Lead inspector

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