

Carre's Grammar School

Northgate, Sleaford, NG34 7DD

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make outstanding progress in Years 7 to 11 and reach high standards in nearly all subjects. Their communication, literacy and numeracy skills are very strong.
- The sixth form is good. Achievement is improving and current students are making good progress after disappointing results in 2012. Some students do exceptionally well and university entry rates are high.
- Students' behaviour, personal development and enthusiasm for learning are all outstanding. They have exceptionally good relationships with their teachers.
- Teaching is typically good and often outstanding. It is underpinned by the excellent subject knowledge of staff. In some subjects teachers use very creative approaches to learning that inspire students to make rapid progress.
- The progress of individual students is tracked very well. Their targets are often changed to maintain the high expectations the school has of every student.
- Students feel very safe at school and are confident in approaching staff with any concerns.
- The school's leaders maintain a sharp and successful focus on raising standards through improving teaching. This has changed mathematics from being one of the weakest subjects to one of the strongest.
- Accurate checks on the quality of teaching and good analysis of assessment data give the school a very clear view of what it needs to do to improve further.
- The governors know the school well and are very effective in challenging the staff to raise standards to even higher levels.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In the sixth form and in a few subjects in the main school, teaching does not always promote outstanding progress.
- Marking does not always guide students towards the next steps in learning that would help them reach their targets.
- Teaching in the sixth form focuses too much on giving information, so students do not have enough opportunities to learn actively through discussion and working together.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 30 lessons, observing 12 jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- They held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, teachers with subject responsibilities, the deputy head boys, groups of students and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at students' work in lessons and in discussion with groups of students in Years 9, 11 and 13.
- They considered a range of school documents, covering self-evaluation, the analysis of assessment data, monitoring of teaching, the curriculum, safeguarding, checks on the performance of staff, and parents and students' views of the school.
- In coming to their conclusions, inspectors took account of the views of 81 parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View), a letter from a parent and responses from 22 staff who completed an inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Frank Knowles, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Louise Lee	Additional Inspector
Patricia Symington	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Carre's is a selective boys' grammar school for Year 7 to 11 with a mixed sixth form. It is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The sixth form is part of the open-access Sleaford Joint Sixth Form (SJSF), run collaboratively with St George's Academy. The school draws its students from Sleaford and a wide area surrounding the town.
- A very large majority of students come from White British backgrounds, reflecting the make-up of the local population. A few come from a wide range of different minority ethnic heritages. Very few students speak English as an additional language. About a quarter of the students have been identified as gifted and talented.
- The proportion of students supported by additional funding through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from some service families, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs. The main areas of support relate to autistic spectrum conditions, dyslexia and other literacy-related difficulties.
- Carre's makes occasional use of the Leicester Street Intervention Unit, part of St George's Academy, to provide alternative learning arrangements for students with short-term behavioural needs.
- The school is a specialist sports college and has operated a shared-use sports hall with North Kesteven District Council since September 2007. It added a second specialism, science, and became a lead school for gifted and talented students in 2009.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Carre's Grammar School converted to become an academy on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Carre's Grammar School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding, especially in the sixth form, science, French and German, by ensuring that:
 - more teachers plan opportunities for students to be actively involved in learning
 - marking always gives students clear and focused guidance on how to improve their work
 - regular use is made of information on the progress of groups of students to bring about faster improvements in teaching and learning within departments.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is outstanding in the main school, and good in the sixth form. Students join Year 7 with above-average standards in English and mathematics. They make outstanding progress and have achieved very high standards at the end of Year 11 in each of the last three years. Almost all achieve five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics, and a particularly high percentage gain grades A* and A in many subjects.
- Standards in mathematics have improved dramatically in the last five years, and two thirds of the students achieved grades A* and A in 2012. Standards in other subjects have also improved, and were all well above the national average in 2012 except in music, French and German.
- The progress students make in Year 7 to 11 is higher than is typical in grammar schools and is well above the national average in English, mathematics and humanities subjects. In modern languages, students make excellent progress in Spanish but underachieve in French and German. In science, they do not make as much progress but results are still above average.
- The school successfully uses early entry to GCSE courses for the most able students, who then pursue more challenging work, for example through beginning AS-level courses or by studying Additional Mathematics. Gifted and talented students achieve highly.
- All groups of students achieve equally well. Although numbers are small, students known to be eligible for free school meals achieved higher results than other students in 2012, and most disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieved well above the national averages for similar students.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good, and the retention rate from Year 12 to Year 13 is high. In 2012, standards at the end of Year 13 were broadly average. Some students achieved very highly and gained places at the most sought-after universities. Given their starting points, however, many students did not make enough progress, particularly in Year 13. The school responded well and the current sixth-form students are now making good progress. School data show that they are on track to achieve better results in 2013, both in Year 12 and Year 13.
- In all year groups, students show a high level of maturity. They reflect on their learning and value the support and guidance they receive from their teachers and other staff. In lessons, their excellent attitudes to learning contribute considerably to their progress, especially where they are fully engaged in discussion or other collaborative activities.
- Students have challenging targets in all subjects and progress towards these is checked regularly, including gifted and talented students and those considering Oxbridge entry. Where students are making particularly good progress, discussion between tutor and student often results in tougher targets being set to maintain the school's high expectations. Information about the average progress of groups of students is not yet used fully to identify areas of where support may be needed to accelerate progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching throughout the school stems from teachers' excellent subject knowledge and commitment. Teachers are highly enthusiastic about their subjects and convey a spirit of curiosity to students. Well-structured and challenging activities and searching questions get

students thinking about and discussing their work. These features all contribute to lessons in which students make good or better progress.

- Some outstanding teaching brings out the best in students and enables them to make rapid progress. In a highly engaging history lesson, students in Year 7 assumed the role of a character in a medieval village. They discussed aspects of their own and other students' characters to generate questions to ask at the end of the lesson about village life. In a computing lesson, students in Year 10 worked enthusiastically to convert hexadecimal numbers to decimal numbers. The additional challenge given to a few more-able students helped them to devise an algorithm for this conversion without using binary numbers.
- Teaching typically makes extensive use of assessment. In a physical education lesson in Year 13, for example, students made rapid progress through discussion in technical language about the benefits of warming up and cooling down in training sessions. Students are well used to evaluating their own and each other's work.
- Not all teaching, particularly in the sixth form, promotes such active learning. Some teachers give long presentations, and many students listen passively during these sessions. This means they do not have the opportunity to develop their understanding through discussion or other activities to increase their involvement in learning.
- The quality of marking also varies too much. In English and history, for example, regular and constructive feedback enables all students to rapidly improve their work. Other marking seen in students' books, particularly in science, was much less detailed, consisting mainly of ticks and with little to guide to students to their next steps in learning.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is supported effectively by learning support mentors. While all give general support, each also has a focus on autism, dyslexia or counselling. This enables specialist support to be used where it is most needed. A primary-trained teacher supports slower readers in Year 7 effectively in one-to-one sessions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is exemplary. Around the school and in lessons, students are courteous to each other and to adults, often engaging in discussion with staff. They show high levels of respect for each other and are very proud to be members of the school community. In the sixth form, boys and girls mix well with each other and with the students from the partner school. Staff, parents and carers share this very positive view of behaviour.
 - The school's records show a reducing and very low level of behavioural incidents, very little bullying and very few exclusions. Students said that they feel very safe in school, and that bullying of any kind is not tolerated. They recognised that a small amount of name-calling occurs from time to time, particularly among new students in Year 7, but say this is dealt with promptly and successfully by staff, and quickly stopped as students grew older.
 - To promote good behaviour, the school uses a popular reward system, reinforced by input on different types of bullying, including homophobic and cyber bullying. This takes place during assemblies, day sessions outside the normal timetable and tutor groups. Students said that they are confident in talking about any concerns to staff, usually their tutor or one of their teachers. The school tackles all forms of discrimination effectively, so that all students have an equal
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chance to succeed.

- In very rare cases, some students display challenging behaviour. The school makes effective short-term use of the Leicester Street Intervention Unit at the nearby St George's Academy to support these students with their work, and swiftly gets them back to Carre's by improving their self-esteem and ability to improve their own behaviour.
- The school council, led by the deputy head boys, has brought about a range of improvements during the last year, such as to the lunchtime menu and the introduction of more academic and inter-house competitions. Students feel their voice is listened to, and they complete a termly questionnaire that allows them to express their views on, for example, the quality of teaching.
- Attendance is above average, and all unexplained absences are followed up through telephone calls on the first day of absence. Punctuality is good, and is supported by the five-minute movement break between lessons and an expectation from teachers that lessons will start promptly.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- A mission to become an outstanding school is driving the leadership and management of the school. The governing body and headteacher give clear direction. Well-thought-out quality assurance systems check that improvement is taking place. Extensive classroom observation has given the headteacher and other senior leaders an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Middle leaders contribute fully to the school's planning process.
 - This positive view of leadership and management is endorsed by the online questionnaires from parents and carers, and the staff questionnaires all showed very strong support for the way the school is led and managed.
 - Annual performance reviews and regular reviews of teaching in each department enable senior leaders to hold department leaders to account. This process does not currently take into account regular reviews of the interim progress of classes and other groups of students. Even so, clear and appropriate priorities for improvement are set out in a five-year strategy, supported by more detailed action plans. All staff have challenging performance targets for their classes and pay increases are not granted unless these are met or teaching requires improvement.
 - The determined drive to improve teaching and learning has raised achievement considerably in Years 7 to 11, dramatically so in mathematics, and identified the key improvements needed in modern foreign languages. Heads of both departments have been fully involved in working alongside senior staff to bring about improvement. The current emphasis is rightly on improving sixth-form teaching.
 - Additional funding through the pupil premium is carefully targeted on individual students, providing one-to-one support where it is needed and financial support for music tuition and school trips. The school keeps careful records of spending to check that it is providing good value for money.
 - Subjects are taught throughout the school in a way that promotes students' spiritual, moral, social development well. Option choices meet students' needs and they appreciate the advice and guidance they receive to help them choose which subjects to study. The Sleaford Joint Sixth
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Form enables the school to provide a very wide range of subjects in Years 12 and 13. Carre's has extensive involvement with the community, especially through sports. It provides widespread specialist support in PE and science to local primary schools.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is outstanding. The governing body has a very clear understanding of the performance of the school and its priorities for improvement. It is well led and is thorough in its work and organisation. The recently reduced number of key committees provides more sharply focused challenge and support to the school. The school's targets for future years were raised following input from the governing body, for example. Additionally, a strategy committee sets out a clear long-term vision for the school's future. All governors are linked to departments and report back on their visits. The governing body is fully aware of the performance of teachers and where teaching needs to be improved. The pay committee has withheld pay increases from staff where students perform less well or teaching requires improvement, and has challenged the school to justify increases where they are granted. They question proposed curriculum changes very thoroughly before agreeing to them. The use of pupil premium funding to ensure full access to all activities has been considered in depth and agreed. The governing body ensures that the school's procedures and policies for safeguarding follow good practice and meet current national requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137213
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	403691

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	817
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Hutton
Headteacher	Nick Law
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01529 302181
Fax number	01529 413488
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