

# **Excell International School**

## **Independent School**

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	925/6024
Unique Reference Number	120734
Inspection number	322260
Inspection dates	22–23 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

This is a co-educational, non-denominational school that operates within a framework providing a Christian ethos. Pupils come from the surrounding area and from abroad. The school is situated near the centre of Boston in Lincolnshire. It was established as Maypole House School in 1884, and previously located near Alford in Lincolnshire. The school name was changed to Excell International School in January 2007. As Maypole House, the school had a nursery, infant, lower junior, upper junior and senior departments. It is currently expanding to replicate that level of provision on the present site. The school makes provision for pupils to board, although there is only one boarding pupil at the present time. The site is shared with the 'Chatterbox Nursery', which is a fully integrated part of the school. There are currently 39 pupils on roll, within the 3 to 18 plus age range and one has a statement of special educational need. The school was last inspected as Maypole House in November 2004. The last inspection of the boarding provision by the Social Care Inspectorate was in October 2007 and no significant issues were raised.

## Evaluation of the school

Excell International is a good school which meets its stated academic aim of, *'enabling each child to benefit from the best of both traditional and modern methods of learning'*, effectively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The curriculum is good. Pupils make good progress because teaching and assessment are good. The school has made good improvements since its last inspection and now meets all the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is tailored to meet the individual needs of pupils of all ages closely. Children in the infants' department follow a curriculum which covers all the areas of learning expected for their age and there are ample opportunities for them to learn, indoors and outdoors, through play-based activities. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 follow a curriculum which enables them to make good gains in their linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological skills. These are balanced with opportunities to develop their human, social, physical, aesthetic and creative knowledge. In addition to religious education, French is taught to all year groups. Older pupils in the senior department are able to study a wide range of examination subjects. These are carefully matched to their abilities and learning needs and the school makes every effort to ensure pupils can pursue their interests and ambitions.

The curriculum is also effective in meeting the needs of those pupils, who, for various reasons, sometimes find learning difficult. In addition to the school's full-time teachers, visiting specialists supplement the curriculum by providing tuition in art and design, mathematics, physical education (PE), science and various aspects of special educational need provision, such as speech therapy. However, the school is currently not able to provide tuition in music to the level it would wish and is seeking to appoint a qualified music teacher. The curriculum is further enhanced by educational visits to places such as the Peak District for geographical studies and Mablethorpe to study a coastal environment.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers have high expectations and provide clear explanations of what they intend pupils to learn in each lesson. Lessons are typified by teachers' good subject knowledge, especially in mathematics, science and French. The activities planned by teachers match the individual needs of pupils very closely. Pupils are usually taught in small groups. The warmth of relationships between teachers and pupils and the consistent recognition of pupils' achievements and efforts help them to become increasingly confident and enthusiastic learners. Teachers ask probing questions to build on pupils' prior learning and to challenge their thinking. They are quick to identify and respond to the needs of any pupils who are at risk of falling behind, which they do most effectively in the case of those pupils who sometimes find learning difficult. The one-to-one teaching provision for pupils who have statements of special educational need is exemplary. Assessment procedures for older pupils are linked closely to the various courses they follow, such as the range of GCSE subjects offered by the school, and provide an accurate picture of their progress. Younger pupils are assessed each week in English and in mathematics. Their progress in other subjects is also recorded. However, there is currently no system to track pupils' academic development progressively over the duration of their time in the school. Whilst it is satisfactory, marking does not always provide pupils with enough guidance about how to improve their work and, in some lessons, teachers do not involve pupils sufficiently in evaluating their progress.

Classrooms are well equipped and there is a good range of resources to underpin pupils' learning in all subjects. Access to information and communication technology (ICT) is good. Teachers make good use of ICT to support pupils' learning and to provide resources that capture pupils' enthusiasm and interest. For their part, many pupils use computers independently to support their own lines of enquiry and undertake research. This includes making good use of the school's 'virtual learning environment' which enables them to access resources whilst working away from the school site.

Pupils from their various starting points, including those who, for various reasons sometimes find learning hard, make good progress. Assessments show that pupils doing GCSEs are on course to attain their predicted levels. Some of these pupils have started at relatively low levels, whilst the education of others has been disrupted in the past. This good progress prepares them well for the next stages of their education and to take their place in adult life.

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## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and work hard during lessons. Attendance is good, with many pupils achieving a level that far exceeds their attendance at previous schools. Pupils behave outstandingly well in lessons, during play and social occasions. Younger pupils apply themselves well, whilst older ones are becoming confident and responsible young adults. They are self-motivated and respond well to opportunities to work independently, for example, when they are revising for GCSE examinations. At such times, they sustain their interest and enthusiasm very well. They are very positive about the education the school provides for them. One pupil, whose disabilities mean he sometimes finds learning hard, explained, 'I struggled at my last school, but since I came to Excell, I've been catching up.' Pupils are eager to respond to questions and willing to present their own views. For its part, the school listens to pupils and takes account of their views. Since the school moved to its present site, links with the community have developed rapidly, especially those with local churches. Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of public institutions and services. Their knowledge and sensitivity towards the beliefs and customs of other cultural groups is outstanding. In this respect they are guided by the exceptional example provided by the staff of the school.

## **Welfare, health and safety of the pupils**

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding. The school has a complete range of policies to underpin its procedures and practices which ensure that pupils are safe and cared for well. There are effective policies to ensure good behaviour and an absence of bullying. This is affirmed by pupils, who say that they feel safe, are able to learn without disruption and get along well with their classmates. Pastoral support is very effective. A strong family ethos is evident throughout the school as adults understand the academic and pastoral needs of each pupil very well. Pupils are successfully encouraged to eat healthily and recognise the importance of taking frequent exercise. In this respect, parents are encouraged to support their children through information provided in the school prospectus.

During the inspection, the school undertook a practice fire evacuation. This was conducted efficiently and smoothly. There are effective procedures to identify any potential risks attached to activities on the school site, which provides a safe and secure learning environment. Arrangements to ensure pupils' safety when they are supervised off-site are also fully in place. All members of the school staff and senior pupils are qualified to provide first aid cover. The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

## **Suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The school complies fully with all the recruitment regulations. Arrangements to check the suitability of staff, including those coming from overseas, to work with young people are robust and up-to-date.

## **School's premises and accommodation**

The accommodation is more than sufficient to cater for the number of pupils on roll. It includes six suitably spacious classrooms, a dedicated ICT room and a hall for indoor PE and communal events. There is a safe and secure playground. Pupils also have supervised access to a well equipped play area and sports ground, including tennis courts.

## **Provision of information for parents, carers and others**

The prospectus contains all the details that parents need to introduce them to the school and give them details of its curriculum and other activities. It also sets out clearly how parents and carers can access additional information should they wish to. Parents receive an annual report providing information about their children's progress. However, these reports do not give enough information about the next steps needed in pupils' learning to help them improve. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed positive views about the quality of education provided for their children.

## **Procedures for handling complaints**

The school's arrangements for receiving and responding to complaints made by parents and carers, pupils and staff comply fully with the regulations.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- set up a system that enables the school to track pupils' academic progress over the duration of their education in the school
- ensure that marking helps pupils to identify what they need to do to make their work even better

- appoint a specialist teacher for music in order to enhance the quality of this aspect of the provision
- improve reporting to parents and carers by including in reports the next steps their children should take in their learning, to enhance their progress.

## School details

Name of school	Excell International School		
DCSF number	925/6024		
Unique reference number	120734		
Type of school	Day and boarding school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 2008		
Age range of pupils	3-18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 21	Girls: 18	Total: 39
Number of boarders	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,500		
Annual fees (boarders)	£9,000		
Address of school	Tunnard Street Boston Lincolnshire PE21 6PL		
Telephone number	01205 363150		
Fax number	01205 363150		
Email address	tony@xl1884.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs D Kay		
Proprietor	Maypole House School		
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft		
Dates of inspection	22–23 April 2008		