

# The Sutton School and Specialist College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103877
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	355481
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lucie Calow

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>	158
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Freda Sunter
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Bishop-Rowe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Scotts Green Close Russells Hall Estate, Dudley DY1 2DU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors and one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Twenty one lessons were observed during which 15 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with three groups of students, with members of the senior leadership team and with governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's self evaluation form, progress tracking data, teacher observation records and a sample of individual student records and case studies. They analysed 41 parental questionnaires, 114 student questionnaires and considered 24 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Students' progress and the extent to which academic progress is matched by their development of personal and social skills.
- Whether there is consistency of teaching and learning across both key stages and between subjects.
- How the strength of the curriculum leads to appropriate and sound accreditation.
- What provision is made for specific groups of students with additional needs, such as those with hearing impairment and those with additional behaviour or learning needs?

## Information about the school

The Sutton School and Specialist College has a specialism in business and enterprise education. All students have a statement of special educational needs. The majority have moderate learning difficulties and a few have additional needs such as autism, a more severe learning need or hearing impairment. There has been a steady increase in admissions over recent years. Approximately 22% of students join or leave the school at times other than at the start of Year 7 or end of Year 11. Around 90% of students are White British, the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is approximately 36%. The school has about three times more boys than girls. The school has achieved several awards including Healthy Schools, Sportsmark and Investors in People. The Principal is seconded part time to the National College for Leadership of Schools.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Students at the Sutton receive a good education. This is achieved because of the targeted support strategies the school puts in place for individual students. The school has a calm and purposeful environment. Students all get on well with each other and benefit from extended opportunities such as directed clubs for key skills and leisure activities such as dance and drumming. Behaviour is good because students respond to structured and consistent behaviour management. The school does not provide enough opportunity for students to develop independent learning behaviours in all lessons. There are good strategies in place to ensure that students are safe. Careful attention is paid to systems for care, guidance and support.

Teaching is satisfactory overall although inspectors saw some good and some outstanding teaching. The best lessons are highly differentiated, enabling students to be independent learners and using imaginative resources including information and communication technology. However this standard of teaching is not consistent across the school. In too many lessons work is not closely enough matched to individual targets. In some lessons, students' interest wanes because presentation lacks interest and delivery does not allow students to progress at their own pace. Despite this, students make good progress overall because the curriculum includes intervention strategies such as 'directed clubs', targeted teaching assistant and teacher support, extension opportunities for students identified as gifted and talented and behaviour support for those who need it.

The curriculum is subject based and provides a very good range of routes and accreditation at Key Stage 4. It supports students' personal and social development as well as their academic needs. Exam success at the end of key stage 4 is a particular strength. Both GCSE and vocational course accreditation are available for appropriately identified students. An inclusion partnership with a local secondary school provides extension of learning for students identified as gifted and talented. This is a particular strength of the school's provision and it contributes to GCSE exam success. A very few students do not currently receive an appropriate curriculum or teaching. The school recognises that some aspects of very recent innovations for these students have not had the desired impact and is reviewing them. The school is very effective in providing students with enrichment opportunities which broaden their life experiences such as the residential trip to France and day visits linked to the curriculum. Students' awareness of cultural and religious diversity is less well developed.

The school possesses a good capacity to improve as is demonstrated by its introduction and management of the effective curriculum and its tracking procedures for monitoring student progress. Leaders and managers confidently articulate actions for improvement. Good capacity is also evident in broad accreditation routes at the end of Key Stage 4, including the introduction of English GCSE. Leaders work collaboratively together and are

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focussed on securing improvement. Middle leaders receive insightful feedback from the senior leadership team, through reports on work scrutiny which are duly shared with faculty leaders for discussion and action. The governing body is an active presence in the school and has successfully campaigned for changes in provision such as the new kitchen. It has a strong relationship with the student school council and the two have successfully worked together. Self-evaluation is amply reported except in the area of monitoring teaching and learning. Work scrutiny, progress assessments and discussion have not been supported by a sufficiently robust system of classroom observation.

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

- Raise standards of teaching and learning so that they are consistently good or better across the school by:
  - ensuring that the use of assessment is finely tuned in each lesson so that the learning of every student is appropriately supported and challenged
  - ensuring that the focus of each lesson is on students' engagement in learning rather than on industrious activity
  - deploying a variety of teaching strategies so that consistent behaviour management is aligned with opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills.
- Enhance the impact of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that high expectations of student progress and the monitoring of teaching and learning are at the heart of self-evaluation and school improvement
  - maximising the opportunities for sharing best practice within and across the school.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

From the point at which they join the school students make good progress overall because of targeted intervention strategies and the personalised curriculum. Some students make outstanding progress and some make satisfactory progress. Very few make inadequate progress and those that do, or are at risk of doing so, are quickly identified. School leaders are able to do this because they have a range of tools with which to track students' learning and are beginning to bring these together. As a result, they can see what actions make a difference to student outcomes and which need to be amended or more widely offered as a result. Students do not yet make good progress in all lessons. This is because not all teaching is closely matched to what students can already do or focussed on what their next individual learning targets should be.

Attendance is broadly average but there are a notable number of students whose attendance is very high. Students are keen to contribute to the school community, through the work of the school council and through their support of each other. They can be seen to carry out helpful activities such as picking up litter and clearing tables after lunch. Some lessons give insufficient opportunity to extend this motivation and responsibility. Students in Key stage 3 have a particularly clear understanding of how to keep themselves healthy in relation to food, exercise, relationships and smoking. With reference to drugs, however,

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they have a less clear view of both their positive medicinal use and their more dangerous and negative effects.

The school's business and enterprise specialism enhances outcomes for students by widening work experience opportunities. This, in turn, has led to employment for a few students. Students have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. Development of personal and social skills is a key focus for the school and good progress is evident. For example, hearing aid users are encouraged to be responsible for their own equipment. The additional resource centre provides a calming environment for those who need additional behaviour support in order that they can successfully return to class. The highly individual nature of the provision means that there are no notable differences in outcomes for different groups of students. Individual progress is tracked and some groups, such as those in the care of the local authority, are separately considered, although this is not yet the case for all groups of students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<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

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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## How effective is the provision?

The school provides a caring environment where students' individual personal needs are well met. The school takes robust measures to ensure its students are safe and suitably involves them in procedures such as annual reviews. Senior members of staff frequently walk around the school, helping to ensure that it is a calm and orderly environment. The strength and impact of partnerships, particularly with health professionals, are a notable aspect of the school's provision which enhance students' well-being. Business and enterprise partnerships allow older students to develop skills in money management and interview techniques. Joint work around safeguarding vulnerable students is particularly strong.

The quality of teaching varies within the school. Some teaching is good or better but this is not yet the case in all lessons. In the best lessons, relationships between staff and students are strong and good links are made between subjects. The use of questioning draws in all students and provides a good level of challenge. Activities are clearly explained so that students understand how what they are learning is of use to them. Lessons are structured around high expectations and activities for different levels of learning need. These features are not yet consistently evident across all subjects or across both key stages.

Care, guidance and support are strong because individual needs are understood and adaptations to provision are made accordingly. The school has very clear strategies to support students with behavioural needs. To be even better, the school should systematically record and evaluate the interventions that have the most impact on personal development. An example would be by keeping records of the students who receive green card rewards, and what difference receiving these rewards has made to their motivation and achievements. A few students report that they do not feel safe and some students identify bullying or poor behaviour as an issue. The school keeps suitable logs and takes action via individual behaviour plans, use of fixed term exclusions, the work of the additional resource centre and changes to the physical environment to address some of these concerns.

*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>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are ambitious for their students, gather good quality data and set appropriately challenging targets. Data are scrutinised for most, but not yet all, of the school's vulnerable groups in order to identify individuals at risk of underachieving. For

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example, the progress and attendance of students who are in the care of the local authority are very well attended to. Senior leaders are not afraid to trial new strategies or to recognise when they require further change. Subject leadership is organised in faculties, which facilitates consistency between subjects. Middle managers are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring the quality of teaching to be able to play a full part in raising standards. Work scrutiny procedures have a clear line of impact from the senior leadership team, through faculty leaders, to teachers and are pertinent and meaningful. Safeguarding procedures are appropriately robust. Incidents of physical intervention are low because of effective behaviour management systems. Staff are appropriately trained and internet safety is suitably considered.

Governors are well informed and are a familiar presence in the school. They attend parents' evenings and social events as well as formal meetings. They support students, for example during Year 7 induction visits. Policies are in place and are reviewed on a regular cycle although a very few require further attention in respect of action plans and impact assessments. Governors take advantage of appropriate training and several take on specific 'link' roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders provide governors with extensive information about self-evaluation, except in the case of monitoring teaching and learning. However, even though teaching and learning has not been an aspect of structured evaluation, the school has recognised the need to embed good teaching and its latest partnership, with 'Teaching Schools,' is helping to launch the sharing of good practice. Governors and senior leaders operate in an environment which fosters questioning and debate. Community cohesion is most in evidence in the way in which governors and school leaders strive to ensure that students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds are supported. They do this well, for example by ensuring students eligible for free school meals are sensitively provided for. In relation to cultural and religious diversity, however, community cohesion and equal opportunities are less well developed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>



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## **Views of parents and carers**

Views of parents and carers largely matched the findings of the inspectors in terms of students' progress and personal and social development. Most feel that their children are well looked after and in particular that the school helps to keep their children safe. One parent commented, 'The staff are very approachable and supportive.' which echoes inspectors' findings that students are very well known as individuals. Parents and carers are also positive about the extent to which their children enjoy school and the way in which it is led and managed so that their children are able to make progress. A very small minority feel that the school could do more to meet their child's particular needs and that they do not have enough dialogue with the school.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Sutton School and Specialist College 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 inspector received 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 158 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	55	14	35	2	5	2	5
The school keeps my child safe	24	60	14	35	1	3	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	48	16	40	3	8	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	50	14	35	2	5	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	21	53	16	40	1	3	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	48	16	40	3	8	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	35	23	58	1	3	1	3
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)	17	43	19	48	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	58	12	30	4	10	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	50	16	40	3	8	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	40	16	40	4	10	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	23	58	12	30	3	8	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	59	12	31	2	5	1	3

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



17 February 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of The Sutton School and Specialist College, Dudley, DY1 2DU**

I very much enjoyed visiting your school this week along with my colleagues. We want to thank you for your contributions to the inspection. We found your questionnaires and talking with you very helpful in making sure we know what it is like to come to the Sutton School.

We think you go to a good school. You have a good variety of subjects in Key Stage 3. The courses that you follow in Key Stage 4 are suitable and make sure that you leave the Sutton with good results. Some of you get very good results indeed in your GCSEs. You told us that most of you enjoy coming to school and that in particular you feel the school helps you to keep healthy, that adults care about you, that you learn a lot in lessons and that teachers tell you what you can do to improve your work. A small minority of you told us that you do not think that behaviour in your school is good and a few of you told us that you do not feel safe at school. While the inspection judges behaviour to be good we have shared your feelings about this with your Principal.

We think that there are some good lessons in your school but we want all of your lessons to be good or better. We have asked your school leaders and teachers to:

- make sure that you all make the most progress possible in each lesson
- help you to become as independent as possible in the classroom.

You can help too, by making the most of every opportunity to learn as much as you can in every lesson.

Yours sincerely

Lucie Calow

Lead inspector

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