

Sir Thomas Boughhey High School

Station Road, Halmer End, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 8AP

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in school and leave with GCSE results that are above the average.
- Teaching is good leading to good and sometimes better results in many subjects, especially in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and their attendance is above average.
- School leaders including governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve further. They support teachers to develop their own practice by providing on-going training opportunities for them that have improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school has a strong community ethos that supports the good behaviour and safety of its pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers do not use all of the available information about pupils' progress and individual learning needs in order to plan lessons that challenge and encourage all pupils in the group to learn best.
- The feedback given by teachers does not always ensure that pupils know what they need to do to move to the next level in each subject.
- The achievement of pupils in some subjects is not as high as in others. The school is taking action to ensure that this will not continue and this is already having positive impact on pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons. Three observations were made jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, groups of pupils and two members of the governing body, and had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 41 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and results from the school’s own survey of parents and carers, in addition to one letter from a parent.
- Eleven completed staff questionnaires were considered.
- Inspectors analysed information about examination results, how well pupils and groups of pupils are doing now and information about their attendance and those who have been excluded. They also reviewed a large range of documents including the school’s own self-evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, records relating to governors’ meetings, information relating to the use of the pupil premium funding and evidence required in relation to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Justine McNeillie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Raye Allison-Smith

Additional Inspector

Michael Marks

Additional Inspector

Mary Hinds

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are White British.
- Just over a fifth of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is less than the national average. This funding is provided for those who are entitled to free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. However, the proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- There are no pupils currently attending educational provision away from the school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation of pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more leads to pupils making outstanding progress in all subjects. Do this by making sure that:
 - leaders provide, and all teachers use, a wide range of information about what pupils already know, understand and can do to plan lessons that are consistently challenging and take into account the needs of pupils of all abilities
 - pupils receive consistently good written feedback that provides them with subject-specific areas for improvement, and they then act on this advice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils arrive in the school with broadly average skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils make good progress and the proportion of pupils who leave with five GCSEs at grade C or above in English and mathematics is above average.
- The attainment of pupils in most subjects is at least similar to that nationally. Results in English and mathematics are above national average. In subjects where results suggest a lower rate of progress than in others, leaders have made sure that pupils catch up so that they make at least the same rate of progress as in other subjects. This is partly being done through better use of information on pupils' progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. This is as a result of good teaching and the additional support they receive.
- Gaps in the attainment of groups of pupils are closing. Those pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding performed as well as others nationally in 2012 but not as well as the rest of the pupils in the school. The results for pupils in English and mathematics for this group in the summer of 2012 showed that they achieved one GCSE grade less than their classmates. School leaders have acted to tackle this and these pupils are now making progress at a faster rate and catching up with others.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support small group teaching, to pay for extra learning support by teaching assistants as well as other aspects such as providing breakfast and access to wider educational opportunities. These include learning how to play a musical instrument. All of these have a positive impact on these pupils' academic and personal achievement.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to provide reading support through teaching assistants and access to good resources. This has resulted in some pupils' reading ages increasing significantly since they started at the school.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their reading and writing skills in almost all subjects. School leaders are working to ensure that there are more opportunities to develop and use these, as well as mathematical skills in all subjects.
- Pupils' achievement is being supported by leaders ensuring that pupils will not be entered early for GCSE exams as it has led to a small number of pupils not achieving the result they were capable of.
- Almost all pupils, and more than is the case nationally, leave school to go onto further education or employment.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good leading to good achievement over time. The school realises that on-going improvement is still needed so that there are more outstanding lessons taught across all subjects.

- Teachers and pupils have positive relationships and pupils feel that teachers want them to succeed and will give them extra support where necessary. These positive features make a strong contribution to good learning.
- Where teaching is best, teachers use carefully chosen resources that engage pupils' interests. Pupils have opportunities to work together in groups and learn well from each other. They also have opportunities to reflect on how their classmates are doing. Good development of these and other team-working skills help pupils to become more independent in their learning. The best learning takes place when teachers have planned activities to offer appropriate challenge to pupils of all abilities in the class. Not all teachers currently make sure this best practice is included in their teaching.
- Good quality homework tasks are set regularly and these support pupils to develop their learning in each subject. Pupils understand why this extra learning is important and the school's leaders undertake regular checks that it is being completed.
- Pupils' work is generally marked regularly and the best examples help them to understand clearly what they have done well and what they need to do in order to improve further in that subject. These teachers require pupils to complete another task or improve existing work. Pupils are also helped to understand how they are doing in relation to their classmates by having clear grades on their work and criteria to measure themselves against. When teaching is not as good as the best, pupils do not receive this very specific feedback and are not expected to respond to teachers' comments.
- Teaching assistants give invaluable support to pupils, particularly those who need extra help, and this has helped them to achieve better results.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour both in lessons and around the school site is good. Disruption to learning is uncommon and pupils know what the consequences will be if they do not concentrate or disrupt others. Occasionally, when teacher's planning is not matched closely to the needs of all the pupils in the group, some pupils become distracted.
- There is a positive community ethos throughout the school and pupils are respectful of each other. A small number of parents expressed concerns about bullying; however, pupils confirmed that it is uncommon, that teachers take prompt and effective action to deal with any reported incidents, and that they understand different forms of bullying.
- Pupils have an assembly four days a week, many of which are planned and delivered by them in form groups. Pupils develop good leadership skills and grow in confidence as a result of these opportunities. Their behaviour in these whole-school gatherings is a noticeable strength and a clear sign of the cohesive, cooperative community school ethos.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that teachers are always around to help and support them but they understand why safe and respectful behaviour is important when they are not observed. This is supported by a weekly programme of personal, social and health education lessons.
- As a result of good behaviour and feeling safe, pupils attend regularly so that attendance is above the national average for similar schools.

- The school's Behaviour Support Team provides good individual support for pupils who require it. As a result there are fewer pupils who are excluded from school than has been the case in the past.
- The pupils enjoy the culture of achievement and success in all aspects of school life as celebrated in the assembly system, by congratulatory communications with parents and by having their photograph on the school website.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels are working effectively to make sure that the school improves further. They understand in what ways the school is successful and what needs to be done in order to achieve better achievement and educational opportunities for their pupils.
- A strength of the leadership is the way that the senior and extended senior leadership team share their vision for the greater improvement of the school with colleagues. This is reinforced further by providing regular and individual support for teachers so that they become more successful and effectively improve the quality of their teaching. Leaders are supporting teachers to perform well but also holding them more rigorously to account for the progress of their pupils.
- The management of teachers' performance is linked to pay progression and any pay awards are based partially on how well teachers make a difference to pupils' achievement.
- The range of subjects on offer and what is taught are suitably matched to the needs of the pupils in the school by being revisited each year. Currently there is no provision of courses off the school site as the school can match the learning needs of its pupils in-house. The school leaders are planning ahead for the future learning needs of their pupils by working to develop closer links with other local schools so that they can increase opportunities as necessary. They are also investigating how subjects taught in limited time between Year 7 and 9 can prepare pupils more thoroughly for GCSE level courses.
- Action is taken to tackle underperformance in subjects. For example, historic data suggested a reduction in standards in science so the school worked with the science leader and the local authority to formulate an action plan to improve this. The school is looking at courses that may match the learning needs of all pupils more closely rather than all pupils taking the courses currently on offer.
- A broad range of learning activities take place out of lessons and in the school. Leaders make sure that all pupils are able to access opportunities by using extra pupil premium funding where appropriate to enable them to take part. An example of this was seen where pupils were able to take part in visits due to extra funding.
- Many activities outside normal lessons and others throughout the curriculum also provided many occasions where pupils were able to develop their own social, moral, spiritual and cultural views and achievement. An example is where Year 8 pupils researched, planned and delivered an assembly to the whole school on tolerance. This included examining subjects such as race relations and cultural diversity.
- The local authority provides light touch support to this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know how well the school is doing in comparison to all schools. They are aware of how the pupil premium funding is being used. They know the relative strengths and weaknesses of subject areas and teachers in the school, and have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and initiatives to improve it. Governors offer good challenge to senior and subject leaders to explain what steps they are taking to ensure underperformance in subjects is being addressed. They fulfil their statutory obligations relating to safeguarding of pupils. Governors support senior leaders to reach decisions about pay for teachers within the school.

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	124393
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	412344

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	759
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hopkins
Headteacher	Steve Gould
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2010
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