



# Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England (VA) High School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number 133672  
LEA Warrington

Inspection number 274869  
Inspection dates 3 - 4 May 2005  
Reporting inspector Mr Jeffery Plumb

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

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Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	Grammar School Road
School category	Voluntary Aided		Latchford
Age range of pupils	11 – 16		Warrington
			WA4 1JL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01925 636414
Number on roll	642	Fax number	01925 417468
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Michael Finlay
Date of previous inspection	November 2000	Headteacher	Mr John Sharples

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
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## Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England (VA) High School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England (VA) High School is a smaller than average comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16 years, but numbers are rising. It is about to submit a bid for specialist humanities status. A very high proportion of pupils join the school half way through their school career. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is high. The majority of pupils come from white, British backgrounds and very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. There are seven pupils in public care. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The school serves wards of considerable socio-economic disadvantage, but pupils also come into this school from outside the immediate area. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is low but rising.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

Senior managers accurately see their school as a satisfactory one, with some extremely strong features. Standards are below the national average in English, mathematics and science but are getting better. Pupils who start in Year 7 and complete their education in Year 11 make at least satisfactory progress. The quality of care for pupils is a strong feature. Excellent links exist with external bodies to support the education and welfare of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils enjoy school, find their learning fun and feel safe. Parents and carers are highly satisfied with the care and support their children receive. Teaching is satisfactory overall and improving. The curriculum is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory and rapidly improving, as more middle managers are developed. Value for money is satisfactory. The pockets of weakness in information and communication technology (ICT) and geography are being addressed. There is a commitment to sharpening the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses within the school to guide planning to raise standards.

Under the direction of the headteacher the capacity for improvement is good. Teachers have already created a good ethos for learning focused on the needs of individual pupils. Some pupils who have failed elsewhere succeed when they come to Sir Thomas Boteler. It is recognised that the weak teaching, where it exists, must be remedied and standards must be notched up. The plans to achieve this aim are robust and have begun to make a positive impact.

### Grade: 3

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Sharpen data analysis to inform strategies for school improvement.

## Achievement and standards

Attainment on entry to Year 7 is low but rising. Pupils who start in Year 7 and finish in Year 11 make satisfactory progress. GCSE results are adversely affected by the high proportion of pupils who join the school during Key Stage 4.

National test results in Year 9 must be seen in the context of the small size of the year group. The disappointing results of a couple of pupils make a huge difference to the overall picture. In 2004, results were better in mathematics and science but significantly worse in English. Current Year 9 pupils make at least satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science but standards remain below the national average.

GCSE results at A\* - C are below the national average. However, there are significant success stories in art and design, drama and food technology, results being above the national average. Overall at Key Stage 4, progress measured against pupils' capability is satisfactory. The school is aware that results in geography and ICT are not good enough and has put in place a series of measures to raise standards in these subjects. Pupils with statements of special educational needs achieve well, as do disaffected pupils in Year 11 following a '*Work Related Learning Programme*'. Underachievement on the part of some higher attaining boys is being tackled by a rigorous mentoring programme.

### Grade: 3

## Personal development and well being

Attendance is below the national figure but improving, because of the effective strategies in place. Despite the school admitting some pupils with poor patterns of learning, who are at risk of exclusion from other schools, permanent exclusions are few, because the school successfully builds their confidence and self-esteem. Disaffected boys, who come into the school during Key Stage 4 with a poor record of attendance and an unhappy experience of previous schooling, have been successfully re-engaged with learning.

Pupils feel safe, free from bullying and racial harassment. They appreciate the commitment to encourage them to adopt a healthy life-style. Pupils consider that their voice is heard and acted upon. The school council is effective in bringing about positive change and improvement in behaviour. The promotion of pupils' independence and the raising of their awareness of spirituality and cultural diversity are strengths. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good and they are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons.

The school evaluates pupils' personal development as good and inspectors concur with this judgement.

**Grade: 2**

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

The school evaluates teaching as satisfactory overall, with a range from good to causing concern. As evidenced when senior managers joined inspectors for the observation of lessons, their judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is consistently good because activities are tailored to their needs and expectations of work are high. Teaching for higher attaining pupils is also good. At its very best, teaching is characterised by good relationships, a brisk pace, good subject knowledge and detailed planning. Where such teaching occurs learning is good; pupils are switched on and challenged to think and solve problems. However, some lessons lack sufficient challenge and the school needs to ensure that this is remedied, if standards are to be raised. Robust action has been taken to lever up the teaching in weak subjects and this is beginning to have a positive impact. Discussion with pupils confirms that they are clear about what they need to do to improve their performance in English, mathematics and science.

**Grade: 3**

### **Curriculum and other activities**

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils. It has improved since the last inspection. Good curriculum planning ensures that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties are well met. The '*Work Related Learning Programme*' provides a successful pathway for disaffected pupils, but this good vocational option is not yet accessible to all pupils. Consequently, the business and enterprise skills of too many are currently underdeveloped. The PSHE programme contributes well to pupils' adoption of healthy and safe life-styles. It raises their awareness of the harmful effects of drug misuse. Citizenship is at an early stage of development. The national strategy for Key Stage 3 benefits all pupils, particularly the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Innovative developments meet the emotional needs of pupils with behavioural difficulties. There is a strong take up of the wide range of sporting and cultural activities provided. Consultation with pupils about how the curriculum can be improved for them is an outstanding feature.

**Grade: 2**

## **Care, guidance and support**

The quality of care provided for pupils is good with some outstanding features. Child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are firmly established and understood by all staff. Risk assessments are robust. Pupils have a trusted adult to turn to should they feel troubled. Every pupil is known well and treated as an individual with the utmost dignity.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and for those children in public care is outstanding. Learning support assistants are used effectively to support these pupils and to track their progress. Links with parents and outside agencies are good.

Pupils are involved in setting their own targets. The mentoring of pupils, particularly Year 11, to keep tabs on their progress is exceptional. Older pupils receive good guidance when choosing options and making career choices. Guidance for those going on to post-16 provision is good.

## **Grade: 2**

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management were evaluated by the school as being good. Evidence from the inspection confirms that they are satisfactory overall, with a number of good features. Although middle management is improving significantly, due largely to training, it is not yet consistently good across all subjects.

The headteacher, new in post since the previous inspection, leads the school well. The school is gaining in popularity as a result, and standards are rising. The commitment to include all pupils, especially those who have been permanently excluded from other schools, is a strong feature. The management of pupils with learning difficulties and challenging behaviour is successful. Innovative developments, such as improving pupil self-evaluation, are very well managed. The deputy and assistant headteacher work in an effective partnership with the headteacher. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are robust in seeking improvements. However, although self evaluation is satisfactory the analysis of performance data needs to be sharper, to guide planning and to bring about further improvements. Monitoring of teaching provides robust assessments of the quality of teaching. These are fed well into the professional development of staff to support them in becoming better teachers and so improve pupil progress.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and involved in decision making. There is evidence of challenge

but a need for governors to ask more detailed questions of the senior management team about standards based on an improved understanding of performance data. Financial planning is good and very effective use has been made of grant money to develop staff.

**Grade: 3**



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## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>2</b>
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>n/a</b>
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>3</b>
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>2</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>2</b>

### **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>3</b>
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	<b>4</b>
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>3</b>
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	<b>2</b>

### **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING**

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>2</b>
The behaviour of learners	<b>2</b>
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	<b>3</b>
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>3</b>

### **THE QUALITY OF PROVISION**

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>3</b>
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	<b>3</b>
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>2</b>
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>3</b>
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>3</b>
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	<b>2</b>

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>How well learners enjoy and achieve</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Yes
Learners' personal and academic development are monitored	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Yes
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work based learning	Yes

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**Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England (VA) High School**

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for welcoming us so warmly to your school. We greatly enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your work, interests and aspirations for the future. We also enjoyed talking with your teachers.

**What we most like about your school:**

- your mature and friendly welcome. It was a privilege to meet and talk with you
- your hard work and good behaviour
- your headteacher manages the school well and you are known to him as individuals
- the care, guidance and support provided for you are good
- those of you who struggle with your work are extremely well supported
- the senior managers in your school know what works well and what needs to be done to improve matters further
- the fact that you enjoy your learning and extra-curricular activities and that you are keen to do well
- we have seen some good teaching that challenges you to do your very best
- your parents and carers are right in thinking well of your school; we agree with them.

**What we have asked your school to do now:**

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science by building on the good work already being done
- to make better use of data to further improve your education.

We know that your headteacher is eager to improve the school for you and his team of teachers are committed to supporting him in achieving this. Keep up your enthusiasm for learning and please support your teachers in making Sir Thomas Boteler a good school.

Best wishes,

Jeff Plumb  
John Atkinson  
Bob Thompson  
Ann Wallis  
(The inspection team)