



Sutton Grammar School for Boys

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103011
LEA Sutton LEA
Inspection number 276805
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Anne Wellham HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	Manor Lane
School category	Foundation		Sutton
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		SM1 4AS
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	02086423821
Number on roll	820	Fax number	02087709070
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Shahenaz Lalani
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr Gordon Ironside

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Sutton Grammar School for Boys is a selective school with entry via a competitive examination at 11+. The school has 820 boys on roll, 220 of whom are in the sixth form. It is located in Sutton, a relatively small, affluent outer London borough. Most of the boys come from central Sutton and adjacent parts of Surrey and Merton. In recent years, applications from a wider area have become common. The school is full and is quite crowded on a compact, town centre site with no green space although there are extensive off-site sports facilities. Most boys are White British with just over a quarter from minority ethnic backgrounds the most significant of Indian origin. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below the national average as is the percentage entitled to free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is proud of its strong ethos. It school provides an effective education within a caring, orderly and supportive environment. Attendance and behaviour is outstanding and pupils are proud to be part of the school. Standards are very high. Teachers track the performance of their pupils well and give clear guidance on how they need to improve and as a result all groups of pupils make good progress. Good attention is paid to personal development and well being and pastoral support for individual students is strong. However, the pastoral curriculum is not structured or delivered consistently across all key phases. The school has a commitment to improve and the strategies used to achieve improvement are generally effective. Since the last inspection the school has taken steps to further raise standards particularly in the use of information communication technology (ICT) as an administrative and teaching tool and in improving the accommodation. The new sports hall and modern language centre, as well as the new arts centre have improved facilities significantly and the benefits are recognised by the students. The school has been awarded Specialist School status for science. Resources are used well and the school gives good value for money. The school's self evaluation is good and inspectors broadly agree with the overall judgements of the school. There is an open sharing ethos between staff at all levels that results in effective outcomes for pupils' learning and well being despite a lack of formalised structures and systems. The school is effective at gathering the views of pupils, staff and parents and works with a range of community partners, but does not fully realise the potential of these links to provide learning opportunities and further students' personal development.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is well established and oversubscribed. It is well led and managed. Good guidance is provided during Year 11 to enable students to make the best subject choices for study in Year 12. A minority of Year 12 students do not develop the skills needed to adapt to the demands of learning at AS level quickly enough. Teachers are aware of this and careful target setting with regular feedback to students on their performance through the form tutor system help to secure good progress. All students are fully aware of the final grades they are expected to achieve, and know what steps need to be taken to reach them. Achievement over the two years is good resulting in outstanding results at the end of Year 13.

What the school should do to improve further

* improve the rate of progress made by all students during Key Stage 4* plan and implement a coherent programme of PSHE and citizenship across all key phases* ensure greater consistency in departmental management, review and development planning* consider how links with partners and the community can be used to improve students' learning and further their personal development

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Pupils enter the school with standards which are well above the national average. Good teaching builds on these and as a result progress from entry until the end of Key Stage 3 is good with students achieving high national curriculum levels. Although standards achieved in Key 4 are very good, the progress pupils make when compared to pupils elsewhere with similarly high levels of prior attainment, is average. At both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, pass rates are very high and the percentage of students achieving the highest grades has steadily improved. Performance in some subjects is very good, for example students achieve results well above average at GCSE and A Level in mathematics and geography. Physics results at A Level are outstanding. There are some subjects where performance, although relatively high compared with national averages, is not as good as might be expected given prior attainment and standards in other subjects. Senior managers are well aware of these differences through their careful analysis of assessment data and have identified appropriate areas for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development is good. Inspectors do not agree with the school that it is outstanding overall. There are excellent features; behaviour is outstanding and levels of attendance and punctuality are very high. Students get on well with each other and recognise a strong 'sense of camaraderie'. For example, sixth formers act as mentors and Year 8 students become 'buddies' to Year 7 students when they join the school. Bullying and racist incidents are very rare and students know that when they do occur they are resolved quickly and effectively. Students feel safe within the school community. Students are articulate and confident learners, they have high aspirations, which are well supported and they demonstrate good social, cultural and moral awareness. The development of their spiritual awareness is less effective. Students are aware of the need to work safely in lessons and of the possible dangers that exist within society. There is an excellent provision for healthy exercise through extensive sports facilities although the school does not always actively encourage the need for healthy eating. Students are keen to become involved within the school community and the school council is a means of allowing students to express their views. However, some of students feel that their views do not always influence the decision making process and the pace of change is slow. Students care about those less fortunate than themselves and raise a great deal of money for a range of charities. Links with the wider community are not used fully to further students' learning or promote their well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge, plan their lessons effectively and build good relationships with the students. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary; they are eager to learn and are responsive. They enjoy opportunities to participate in lessons, and respond to the enthusiasm that many of their teachers display. In good lessons, there is a clear sense of purpose, pace of teaching is brisk and good use of questioning and resources promote good learning. Teachers in these lessons give good feedback and provide opportunities for students to be involved in assessing and reviewing their own learning. In less effective lessons, groups of pupils are not always fully involved and a small group of students are allowed to dominate discussions. Teaching and learning is also good in the sixth form. Students value the high quality of teaching they receive in most lessons and their learning is helped significantly by their motivation and mature behaviour. Close attention is paid to their progress and opportunities are available for one to one support and guidance. Systems are in place, at whole school, faculty and department level to support teachers to develop professionally and improve teaching and learning strategies.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum provision in the school and in the sixth form is good. The school reviews its curriculum annually, and responds positively to students' interests and career aspirations. All the compulsory elements of the curriculum are in place. Students in Year 8 can choose to study two from three modern foreign languages. The lack of a well structured and effectively delivered personal, social, health education and a citizenship programme at Key Stage 3 is limiting students' personal development and awareness. At Key Stage 4, the choice of GCSE courses is very good and this includes a short course in religious education. Subjects offered from Year 10 onwards are adjusted annually to reflect student preferences. The sixth form curriculum has an increasing choice of academic courses with the recent introduction of psychology, theatre studies and information technology and plans to introduce philosophy and critical thinking during the next academic year. Students appreciate the very good range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities that provide good support for the development of their overall academic and personal needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good overall and that provided for individual students is often outstanding. Staff know the students very well and are therefore able to target support at those who require help most. Students find teachers approachable and good arrangements exist to meet the needs of the

more vulnerable students and those with learning disabilities. There is a commitment in the school to ensuring that students are safe and aware of the possible dangers they might encounter within the wider community. The arrangement for dealing with child protection and health and safety are sound. Risk assessments are in place and governors play a role in monitoring their application. Half termly interim assessments provide tutors with a good range of performance data which enables them to support and advise their students. Tutors play a key part in this role. The level of advice provided about progression from years 9 and 11 is appropriate. The school organises an informative Careers Fair, which is well supported by local businesses and provides a very good opportunity for students to increase their understanding of possible career pathways.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior managers know staff and pupils extremely well and are very committed to raising standards and improving the quality of education. The school has a good capacity for further improvement. The expansion of the senior management group has improved strategic leadership and allows the headteacher to delegate more effectively. Through their involvement in the academic and pastoral boards managers develop a shared vision for improvement which is disseminated to other members of staff. Processes that lead to improvement are not always formally documented but they are understood by staff at all levels and implemented effectively. Lessons are monitored and observed regularly as part of the performance management procedures and provide accurate assessments of the quality of teaching and learning. Individuals have considerable autonomy within their areas of responsibility and approaches to subject leadership and development are not consistent. Quality assurance and self review is not formalised but managers use a range of methods, including good use of data, to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their departments. They track pupils' progress well and inform students of what they have to do to improve. The governing body are well informed about strategic planning and provide a suitable level of challenge through debate and discussion.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we made about your school. We enjoyed meeting groups of you, talking to your teachers and visiting lessons. We were impressed with your politeness and courtesy. Your views are very important and helped us to understand some of the excellent aspects of your school and to identify some things that could improve.

* We think that your school is a good school. The school environment is safe, caring and supportive and helps you learn.* Your attendance and behaviour is outstanding.* You told us how strong the camaraderie is between students and we agree with you. You are willing to help and support younger students as mentors or 'buddies' and show respect for each other. Bullying and racist incidents are rare.* There are a lot of extra curricular activities, especially sports and these are very popular.* Your teachers care about you and expect you to achieve very good results in examinations because you have the ability to do so. They are good at helping you reach your targets by telling you what you have to do to improve. * You value the opportunity to share your views through the school council but some of you feel that the process could be more effective if you had more influence in decision making.

To make your school even better we think your school needs to:* Work with you more effectively to improve the progress you make at GCSE and AS level according to your abilities* Make sure that teachers who are in charge of the different subjects are more consistent in the way they plan and introduce new ways of teaching and learning. * Introduce a coherent programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship into your tutor time and lessons which will help your personal development and allow you to work more closely with the wider community.

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We wish you and your teachers success for the future.

Anne Wellham HMI, Lead Inspector