



Tudor Grange School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104109
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 277073
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Michael Smith HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Dingle Lane
School category	Community		Solihull
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		West Midlands B91 3PD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7055100
Number on roll	1271	Fax number	0121 7038226
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr W P Rock
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs J A Bexon-Smith

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	Inspection number 277073
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Tudor Grange School is a popular and oversubscribed specialist technology school. Its pupils live in a socially and economically advantaged southern area of Solihull and surrounding villages. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well above the national average. The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language or have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school is involved in a number of national and local educational initiatives to extend pupils' opportunities and raise standards further.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Tudor Grange is a good school with many outstanding features. Standards are very high and improving and it has developed a curriculum that motivates and inspires students to achieve well. Teaching and learning are good with many excellent features. Inspectors judge the school's overall effectiveness to be good and not outstanding because some high attaining pupils are not suitably challenged in lessons and they do not make sufficient progress, especially in mathematics. The school has identified these issues as it strives to become world class by continuously and rigorously evaluating the impact of its provision and then to improve further its quality.

Pupils' personal development and welfare are very good. Pupils' attendance is high, they enjoy school and behave excellently. They are not only taught about healthy living but they also follow this up by many of them choosing healthy options at lunchtime.

The school has demonstrated a good capacity to improve. It has worked hard and effectively to respond to issues from the previous inspection. The provision for the pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) has improved. Good systems to improve communication with parents and gain their views about the school have been developed. However a few parents still feel the school does not do enough to take account of their views.

The school is extremely well led by the headteacher who is ably supported by her leadership team. They rigorously hold curriculum leaders responsible for the quality of provision in their subjects. Governors support and challenge the school well and hold the headteacher to account for the quality of education.

The school makes effective use of its specialist school status to work well within the community, develop teaching and learning and to support other schools. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in mathematics by continuing recent developments to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve the achievement of higher attaining pupils by developing appropriate whole school strategies to ensure greater challenge in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement and standards are good because although standards are very high and improving, some high attaining pupils do not always make sufficient progress, especially in mathematics. The school has been very effective in ensuring as many pupils as possible reach the higher grades at GCSE but not enough pupils gain the highest possible grades (A/A*), based on their starting points and capabilities.

Standards are exceptionally and consistently high at both Key Stage 3 and GCSE with results significantly above national averages. Pupils start Year 7 with standards that are well above the national average, and in English and science they make good progress as they move through the school. However, progress in mathematics is not as good.

In 2005 the percentage of pupils gaining five or more higher grades at GCSE increased to 94%, with particularly good results in geography, science and English literature. The school has worked well on narrowing the gap between the attainment of boys and girls and they now have similarly high standards.

The school sets challenging targets, including those for specialist school, which it strives to meet. It exceeded the target for five or more higher grades at GCSE by six percentage points in 2005.

Pupils identified as requiring SEN support are well supported and do as well as other pupils within the school. Pupil monitoring and academic mentoring have identified a lack of appropriate challenge in the provision for higher attaining pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils is outstanding, with pupils responding positively to their experiences in school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and departments effectively ensure these elements are covered within lessons. The school has an atmosphere in which pupils learn to value themselves and their peers. Pupils co-operate very well. For example Year 11 pupils voluntarily take part in a range of support initiatives to help younger pupils settle when they arrive at the school, to overcome difficulties and to make academic progress. Pupils feel that they have an influence on the school's decisions that affect them. They have a good understanding of the democratic process through the election of year councils feeding into the school council. Cultural development is strong. This is shown in musical performances and in the international week run annually to celebrate the experiences of peoples of other continents. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is well above average. They understand fully the sanctions used for instances of unsatisfactory behaviour, and support the school in its policies.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community through peer mentoring, the school council, and other activities, including team games, support for charities, locally and worldwide, and public performances including to local groups. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, choosing healthy food from the wide range in the canteen that, at their request, includes a salad bar. A high proportion of pupils participate in sport, with Year 11 pupils taking responsibility for organising teams. Pupils have a good understanding of economic well-being through work experience, annual events such as Enterprise Day and the opportunities given to all pupils for exercising independence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers plan a stimulating mixture of relevant activities in each lesson, which engage the pupils' interest fully. They also improve the quality of learning by building thoughtfully on research, national initiatives and expertise drawn from their own involvement in projects to help teachers in other schools.

In the best lessons, teachers generated interest by presenting stimulating audio and visual materials. They promoted frequent opportunities to consolidate understanding through good discussion and effective questioning, and offered well designed written exercises to extend the pupils' understanding. There is a valuable system of additional help through individual support programmes, negotiated with parents and pupils, to help pupils with specific needs. This has led to improved results for those pupils otherwise at risk of failure. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported well, because their needs are analysed regularly and acted on.

Lessons were less successful when the level of work did not challenge the pupils sufficiently to ensure that they made enough progress in relation to their different starting points. Gifted and talented individuals are not always extended fully.

Senior and middle managers check on teaching regularly to make sure its quality is sufficiently good. This rigorous monitoring is used well to identify areas for improvement and successful strategies, which can then be used in a collaborative approach to improving teaching and learning further. Pupils' progress is supported by a thorough assessment system, which sets relevant individual targets and checks up on progress. The pupils receive detailed, frequent advice about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The schools' curriculum is stimulating and is enriched through its specialist school status. This adds considerably to the breadth of pupils' learning experiences in Key Stage 3 and examination courses in Key Stage 4. The curriculum responds well to local needs and includes work related courses, which reflect the local economy, as well as the interests and aptitudes of individual pupils.

The school continually reviews and develops the curriculum and is actively involved in a series of well considered initiatives to refine it further. For example, the curriculum for Year 7 was changed in September 2005 following a careful analysis of the obstacles to learning shown by the school's lowest attaining pupils in the previous Year 9 and Year 11. Also, having attracted a substantial grant from a national organisation, two groups of pupils in Year 9 are being provided with appropriate additional resources to accelerate their learning and achievement. While early evaluations are positive there

is insufficient evidence yet to judge the impact of these on pupils' understanding and attainment.

The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has been carefully constructed to allow the pupils to follow different pathways, which meet their needs well. A small number of pupils each year follow an effective alternative curriculum in collaboration with local work based learning providers.

Until recently the school has provided a variety of appropriate extension activities for higher attaining pupils outside the timetabled curriculum. Whilst pupils have the opportunity to undertake additional subjects a coherent strategy to ensure that all pupils are challenged in their lessons is not in place and has been identified by the school as an area for improvement.

Large numbers of pupils engage in extra-curricular activities including many taking part in sporting activities at the weekend. However, the lack of a suitable large indoor sports facility limits the range of options available to them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school gives clear consideration to all aspects of the pupils' welfare and personal development. There are very good arrangements to ensure health and safety, including full attention to risk assessments and internet safety policy. Child protection procedures are fully in place and well understood.

Pupils are set challenging targets and they know how well they are progressing to meet these. They are taught to assess their own performance and to discuss with peers how to improve. Parents value discussions with staff about the progress of their children and also praise the provision of meetings to explain aspects of the curriculum such as areas of the personal and social development (PSD) course. Almost all parents fully support the school. One said, "Our boy is cared for as a person, not simply as a pupil who needs to be educated". There is a wide range of effective measures to prepare pupils for their future, with careers education in PSD integrated with work experience and special events supported by local companies. Pupils with learning needs receive good support.

Pupils know where to turn if they have problems, with both teachers and trained Year 11 pupils available to help. There is very little bullying and a low number of racist incidents. Any such incidents are well handled, so pupils feel safe. Pupils in Year 7 said that they received very good support when they transferred from their primary schools. Sanctions that are well understood and generally accepted, promote excellent behaviour.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding because the school is very well led by a highly respected headteacher who is well supported by the leadership team. The team has accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and it has formulated a comprehensive plan on how to improve including the bid for fourth phase technology college status. The governing body hold the school to account well and provide a good level of support and challenge to the headteacher.

The school has a very effective departmental review system, which ensures subject leaders and pastoral heads monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and take appropriate steps to improve. For example departments identify elements of good teaching practice and then share these with other colleagues. The school strives to be world class and is making good progress by improving attainment and developing the whole child.

Parents and pupils have made valuable contributions to the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and how it can improve. The school does not report citizenship as a separate National Curriculum subject.

Teachers are highly motivated and make good use of the many opportunities provided through the school's specialist status to keep themselves up to date; for example by using staff to help train and deliver good practice to other schools, trainee teachers, and visiting professionals.

The school has identified appropriate areas to develop and is making good plans to deliver the International Baccalaureate for post 16 pupils next year in conjunction with a local college.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

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

Tudor Grange School Dingle Lane Solihull West Midlands B91 3PD

25 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for your very positive responses and excellent behaviour when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting with you and your teachers. Your comments helped us to get a clear understanding of school life, what you enjoy and value in school.

We thought that your school is a good school with many outstanding features. You work well with your teachers to make sure that the school is a stimulating and interesting place. Your high attendance and positive comments show how much you like school and appreciate the work of the staff.

We were pleased to see how you could influence what happens in school and how you take health issues very seriously, for example how many of you chose the healthy option at lunchtimes. You enjoyed some very interesting lessons and activities with some good teaching and a varied curriculum, including a large variety of extra-curricular clubs and sports.

Your school is well led and knows its strengths and also the areas it wants to improve. As in nearly all schools, there are areas that could be better. A lot has been done to raise standards and the number of pupils who get five or more higher grade passes at GCSE is very high. However we feel that some of you are not stretched enough in lessons and not enough of you get A and A* grades at GCSE. Also, the recent improvements in mathematics need to be continued so that more of you achieve well in the subject.

We wish you well for the future and hope you enjoy your time and are successful at this very caring and supportive school.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith HMI