



Stretford Grammar School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106368
LEA Trafford
Inspection number 277542
Inspection dates 8 March 2006 to 9 March 2006
Reporting inspector Ms Julie Price Grimshaw HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Granby Road
School category	Community		Stretford
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Manchester, Greater Manchester M32 8JB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 865 2293
Number on roll	734	Fax number	0161 866 9938
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr T McManus
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Peter Cookson

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 8 March 2006 - 9 March 2006	Inspection number 277542
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Stretford Grammar School is a smaller than average mixed grammar school; there are 787 pupils on roll aged 11-18. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and approximately a quarter of all pupils have a first language other than English; this is well above the national average. There are very few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school was awarded specialist science college status in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's evaluation of its work shows an accurate awareness of strengths and areas for future development, and inspectors agree with the school's judgement that overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Standards are high and most pupils make adequate progress during their time at the school, although there are some pockets of underachievement. Tracking systems are used in order to set targets for pupils, but these are not always sufficiently focused on analysing the progress of individuals; limited resources mean that the school is not currently able to use information and communication technology (ICT) in order to support and refine this process.

The school provides a harmonious multicultural environment for learning; pupils behave well and demonstrate very positive attitudes towards the school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in the main school, and the curriculum is broad and balanced. However, the school does not fully meet statutory requirements in delivering the National Curriculum programmes of study for ICT in Years 10 and 11. The school cares for its pupils well and staff demonstrate high levels of commitment. Staff work hard to identify and support those pupils whose need for additional language development is greatest. However, the needs of a significant and growing minority of learners who have English as an additional language are not, at present, fully met, and this impacts upon the achievement of these pupils.

The school has a new headteacher, appointed in September 2005. He has started to work effectively with staff in order to identify areas for development and implement strategies designed to bring about improvement. The school's improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, and the school demonstrates the capacity to make the necessary further improvements.

Specialist science college status was awarded in September 2005. Although it is too early to evaluate the impact of this, the head of science and other school managers have identified a range of innovative projects designed to raise standards and enhance learning across the school.

The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the sixth form is good. Over the past four years, data on the progress students make at advanced (A) level show a significant and impressive year on year improvement. In terms of examination results, further mathematics, chemistry, history and sociology were particularly successful subjects in 2005. Approximately a third of students in the sixth form join from other schools; most of these students are attracted by the local reputation of the sixth form as a friendly and caring multi-ethnic community. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form are good; students enjoy their work and feel that their chosen courses offer challenge. The quality of pastoral and academic support provided to students in the

sixth form is a strength of the school; teachers know their students very well, and students foster mutually supportive relationships. The recently appointed head of sixth form has a clear vision for future development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further refine and develop pupil tracking systems, using ICT, so that these can be used to support all pupils in achieving their full potential.
- Introduce a programme of study that fulfils National Curriculum requirements in ICT for all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Ensure that the needs of those pupils who do not have English as a first language, and require additional support, are fully met.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' attainment on entry is well above the national average and remains at this level throughout the main school. The number of pupils gaining five or more higher grades at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) is consistently very high compared to the national average; however, examination results in 2005 fell short of school targets, and have led to school managers taking steps to address this issue by analysing the reasons for underachievement. Given their high starting point, pupils' progress is broadly satisfactory, although there are some pockets of underachievement; for example, significant proportions of the most able pupils and those who have English as an additional language do not always make the expected progress. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that of their classmates. Students in the sixth form make good progress.

The school uses data in order to track pupils' attainment. However, tracking systems do not focus sufficiently on setting challenging individual targets based on pupils' progress. At present, limitations in resources mean that the school is not able to use ICT in order to support and refine its use of data.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy school life. Attendance is just above the national average. Most pupils show very good attitudes to work in lessons. They respond very well to their teachers, work very well in pairs and small groups and do their best when working on their own. Very positive relationships with adults and amongst pupils ensure that learning takes place in a business-like and supportive atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour is generally very good in lessons and good elsewhere.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They confirm that rare bullying incidents, mostly teasing and name calling primarily in Key Stage 3, are taken seriously and are well

handled, once reported to adults. This multicultural community is very amicable, and there is no evidence of any racial tension.

Pupils' cultural development, especially multicultural, is a real strength, and their moral and social development is good overall. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles; they are allowed to drink water during lessons, and the school is beginning to take steps to promote healthy eating. Whilst pupils make an important contribution to the life of the school, through school and key stage councils, pupils and staff recognise that further opportunities would benefit all. Learners across the school engage readily and enthusiastically in a range of fundraising events. Pupils gain many important skills for the workplace and later life but their ICT skills need more systematic development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's assessment that teaching and learning are satisfactory in the main school, but judge that these are good in the sixth form which is above the school's assessment. Most teachers possess good classroom management skills. They pace their lessons well, introduce a variety of activities and so hold the attention of pupils. For example, during a music lesson, Year 7 pupils developed their understanding of rhythm through a series of well-paced, interesting and appropriate tasks, involving a combination of paired work, small group work and individual study. The best lessons are well planned; the teacher is very knowledgeable about the subject and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to be active in their learning. In many of the more effective lessons plenary sessions are used effectively to consolidate pupils' understanding of the topics covered. However, in a few lessons the planning lacks clarity and in some instances methods and activities are not distinguished from learning outcomes. Teachers' skills in questioning pupils are variable. In some cases the teacher adopts a lecturing style and asks questions that require only very brief answers, but in the best practice questioning is used to involve pupils effectively and so give the lesson vitality and relevance. In the less effective lessons pupils are told what to do; in the better lessons they are shown how to perform tasks. In a few lessons, teachers used assessment strategies skilfully to make pupils fully aware of how to improve further; for example, in a GCSE drama lesson, the teacher supported the learners very effectively in providing extremely helpful, constructive and friendly advice to each other, resulting in some very high quality work. The quality of marking is inconsistent. The best of it provides clear and helpful guidance on what pupils need to do to improve. However, too many books are marked superficially, with errors overlooked and little or no attempt to provide guidance.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum, both in the main school and the sixth form, is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9 the school offers a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. In Years 10 and 11 pupils follow a core curriculum plus optional subjects. In some subjects the school provides additional challenges for higher attaining pupils, for example, by being able to take statistics or by taking part of the AS course in English alongside GCSE. Additional support is also provided outside the school day to extend pupils' opportunities to gain qualifications. In religious education (RE), for example, pupils have one timetabled lesson but many attend lunchtime lessons, and this helps them to gain a GCSE in the subject. Enrichment opportunities overall are satisfactory, though pupils particularly appreciate the opportunities available in music and games. However, there are limitations. The school does not meet the National Curriculum programmes of study ICT in Years 10 and 11, even though this was identified as an area for improvement in the previous report. At sixth form level the school offers students a good range of options but RE is not appropriately integrated into the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Overall, the school takes good care of its pupils. Pupils confirm that they are well supported if they have personal difficulties. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place. The majority of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. The school works hard, within its own resources, to meet the growing level of need posed by pupils for whom English is not their first language. However, current resources and procedures are insufficient, leading to some underachievement by a proportion of these pupils.

The transition from primary school is well handled, with most students settling quickly into school; there are appropriate strategies to address the needs of the minority who experience some difficulties. Pastoral staff review pupils' personal development and academic progress regularly. Although review days are clearly appreciated by most pupils, the full effectiveness of this system is somewhat reduced due to some shortcomings of the pupil tracking systems. A good programme of careers guidance is well supported by the local community and the Connexions service. Pupils in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form rightly consider that the advice and guidance for course and career choices is a positive feature.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has already begun to identify the school's main areas for development, and is working with other senior managers in order to implement appropriate strategies; together they are forming a clear vision for the future of the school. A potentially

productive and beneficial relationship with the local authority has been established since the appointment of the headteacher. There are some examples of effective leadership at middle management level, and plans to further develop the roles of middle managers, capitalising fully on the expertise of staff across the school, are entirely appropriate. There is a well established performance management system, linked securely to staff development. Robust procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching across the school are currently being established. Members of the governing body show high levels of commitment to the school. In meetings, they assist school leaders by exploring all issues in much detail.

Resources are deployed satisfactorily overall, although the current ICT infrastructure does not meet the needs of the school. This impacts upon the use of ICT for both administrative and curriculum purposes.

The quality of improvement planning is satisfactory overall, and procedures for establishing an effective cycle of planning, evaluation and review are under way. Overall, the school demonstrates the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

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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?	3	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	2
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?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
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	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
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?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
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	3	
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

Following our visit to your school we would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for sharing your views with us. We would like to tell you what we found out about your school.

We think that Stretford Grammar is a satisfactory school with some good features. We believe that the staff care about your personal development and are very committed to supporting you during your time at school. One of the things we liked best about your school is the fact that it really is a thriving multicultural community; we were so impressed with the way that you show respect for each other and work together so well.

Examination results at Stretford Grammar School are well above the national average, but we feel that some of you are not making as much progress as you could during Years 7 to 11. We have talked to your teachers about this and we know that they are keen to help all of you fulfil your potential; we have asked them to look in particular at target setting for each one of you, so that you are constantly challenged and stretched.

We believe that all of the teaching in your school is at least satisfactory, and some is really good; you told us that the lessons you enjoy most are those where you are encouraged to take an active part and be creative. The ICT facilities at the school would benefit from updating; we know that staff are concerned about this, and there are plans to improve ICT resources across the school. It is important that all pupils in Years 10 and 11 develop their ICT skills, and we know that the school is planning to introduce courses to address this.

We were impressed with the sixth form at the school. We thought that the students were mature and hardworking, and it was great to see the way in which they helped and supported each other. The examination results have got better and better over the last four years, which is really encouraging.

Mr Cookson has not been in post for very long, but we believe that he and the other school managers have already started to make some changes that should help you all to make better progress. We were delighted that so many of you are proud of your school, and we wish you every future success.