



# Toot Hill School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122865  
**LEA** NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 281364  
**Inspection dates** 8 March 2006 to 9 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. David Martin LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	The Banks
<b>School category</b>	Community		NG13 8BL
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01949 875 550
<b>Number on roll</b>	1481	<b>Fax number</b>	01949875551
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr.Barrie Thomas
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. John Tomasevic

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	8 March 2006 - 9 March 2006	281364

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Toot Hill is a larger than average specialist school for Enterprise in Business and Arts. Students are drawn from a wide rural area centred on the town of Bingham. Social disadvantage in the area is low, as is the proportion of students eligible for free school meals. Most students are White British with a small number of students having a different ethnic heritage. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is low, as is the proportion of statemented students. The school population is very stable, with the great majority of students who start at the school continuing to the age of 16 or beyond. The sixth form was re-branded as Toot Hill College in 2002 in order to further meet the needs and aspirations of post-16 learners. Some 60% of learners currently continue from the main school into the sixth form.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Toot Hill is a satisfactory school which has a strong commitment to continuous improvement and has some good and developing features. This is an effective school that offers sound value for money. Particular strengths include the effective pastoral and academic support given to students and the innovative and responsive curriculum provision. The extensive partnerships, forged through the Business and Arts status, are significant strengths. Standards attained by students are above average overall at Key Stage 3 and significantly above average at Key Stage 4. However, as pupils enter the school with attainment well above average, the progress they make in the main school is not as good as expected. Progress in English was very poor in the 2005 Key Stage 3 tests. Standards in the sixth form are good. The guidance and support given to pupils is good in all respects. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) provision, tutoring and support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly strong features. Attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning are only satisfactory. The school has recognised the need to strengthen the climate for learning in order to involve and engage students more consistently. A renewed focus on effective learning and teaching is having a positive impact on classroom practice. Where practice is particularly effective there is good planning and engaging learning styles that are well matched to students' abilities. Such practice is not yet fully embedded throughout the school. As a result, less effective teaching often results in less well motivated learners and, at times, inappropriate behaviour. Leadership has been strengthened by recent appointments. The leadership team is focused well on improving teaching and learning and, thereby, raising attainment. Systems for monitoring and planning are thorough, but need to evaluate impact more rigorously. The inspection team broadly agree with the school's own self-evaluation. However, the school's evaluation of achievement and standards and the curriculum were higher than the judgements made by the inspection team. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and the capacity for further improvement is good.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The school correctly considers the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form to be good. Students make good progress and consistently reach standards above those typical nationally in advanced level examinations because of the good quality of the specialist teaching they receive. Almost all students complete the courses they begin. Most Year 13 students go on to follow their chosen course of higher education. The curriculum is good. It offers a wide range of advanced courses and a developing range of courses at other levels, including vocational subjects. The school recognises the importance of broadening further the range of courses on offer, to fully meet the needs of a wider range of students. The academic curriculum is complemented by excellent opportunities for enrichment and personal development, which are eagerly taken up by the students. Sixth formers make a highly effective contribution to the school community. The school gives students good guidance on their choice of courses

and careers. Teachers monitor the progress of individual students very closely. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Leaders have clear vision for its future development and the capacity to improve provision further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve, as a priority, standards at Key Stage 3, particularly in English. - Raise the quality of teaching across the school to that of the best practice. - Further develop a more purposeful learning culture by engaging students as full partners in their own learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Standards attained by students at Key Stage 3 are above average, except in English, which is around average. At Key Stage 4 results are significantly above average and have improved a great deal over recent years. Standards in the sixth form are good. However, the attainment of students on entry to the school is well above average, with a high proportion of students attaining higher levels. Consequently, the progress students make as they move through the school has not been as good as that expected, particularly in Key Stage 3 tests. The progress made in English was very poor in 2005, although action has been taken and school assessment indicates that this will improve. Progress in science was also weak, whilst progress in mathematics was similar to that made in most schools. By the end of Key Stage 4 students make better progress overall, closer to that made by most schools. This is also true of results in mathematics, whilst English progress is similar to that made in all schools. The progress made by students in the sixth form is good. All groups of learners, including those with learning disabilities or difficulties make similar progress. The 2005 targets set by the school were met in mathematics at Key Stage 3 but not met in science and English. Targets for Key Stage 4 were ambitious, but the school did not achieve them. Targets for 2006 are again ambitious, but school assessment indicates that these should be met. Key Stage 3 targets are more modest but, if met, would represent a significant improvement on present progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

The overall quality of students' personal development is good. There has been good improvement in provision for students' spiritual development. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. The co-ordination of PSHE is now highly effective. The teachers responsible for students' welfare know them well and treat the students fairly. Through their questionnaires, parents expressed concern about students' behaviour, and that the school did not listen to their children's views. Inspectors find students behave satisfactorily, and the majority have sound attitudes to learning. Nonetheless, the school recognises that its learning culture, in partnership with

students, is not as strong as it could be. Should students choose to do so, there are good opportunities for them to represent their views through school councils. Attendance is satisfactory, and in line with the national average. Nevertheless, exclusions, although for good reason, are high. There is some challenging behaviour by a significant minority of students. However, there is a highly effective pastoral system to manage and support such students, and to promote the necessary improvements. Students are encouraged to develop safe practices during their time at school, and to develop healthy lifestyles. They told inspectors they see the school as a supportive community. There are very good opportunities for sixth form students to repay this support through work with younger students. Skills developed through careers, work related learning, and work experience, help prepare students well for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that teaching is good, both in the main school and in the sixth form. In the sixth form, as a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and skilful planning, students learn to be enquiring and independent in their learning and achieve well. Students in the main school learn well when lessons are properly planned, time is used efficiently, and the individual needs of students are fully considered. As a result students develop good thinking skills and become increasingly independent. However, in some lessons, planning does not take enough account of students' different needs and when students are not fully engaged, their behaviour deteriorates. At times, expectations are not high enough, and the teacher's dominance of lesson activities prevents students from taking enough responsibility for their own learning. Students' frequent late arrival to lessons reduces teaching time. The school is assiduous in monitoring the consistency of teaching, but is more generous in its own judgement of the quality of some teaching than was found during the inspection. Recent developments which emphasise the use of assessment to ensure that all students achieve as well as possible are not yet fully embedded. Students know their targets and how well they are doing in relation to achieving them. Marking is regular and consistent, and frequently provides helpful comment for further improvement. Homework is generally used well to reinforce and extend learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good in both the main school and in the sixth form. The school provides a broad range of post-16 courses with most students choosing an academic route. The curriculum for students in the main school has improved since the previous inspection. It is inclusive, reflects the school's specialist status and has had a positive impact on GCSE results. Courses leading to a GCSE in information and communication technology and business studies have been introduced into Year 8. The more able

students are encouraged to take examinations in Year 9. In Years 10 and 11 most students follow one work related course. Work related GNVQ courses have been introduced as an alternative to more academic GCSE courses. A small number of less able students take fewer GCSE subjects, and receive extra help with basic skills. Students take part in a broad range of extra curricular sporting activities, and the recently established Arts Academy offers a wide range of activities which are well supported both in school and within the wider community. The school has been awarded both Sportsmark and Artsmark Gold.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support provided for students are good. The senior staff and heads of year have significant strengths in the way they relate to students. They are very good at supporting students' aspirations and achievement. The setting of targets for improvement is providing parents with increasingly helpful information. There have been suitable improvements, since the last inspection, in reporting to parents. Pastoral support effectively promotes students' self esteem. Due care and attention is paid to ensure the safety of students whilst at school. Child protection procedures are very effective. There are very good links with support agencies, and this is a strength. There are helpful arrangements to ensure the smooth transfer of students at each stage of their education. Options and careers advice are good. Arrangements for work experience, and work related learning are good. Provision for students with learning difficulties or disabilities is very good. An experienced, and dedicated, team of teachers and other staff work very hard to support students. Consequently, students successfully acquire the necessary personal and key skills for their future well-being.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The overall leadership and management of the school are good. This judgement is consistent with the school's evaluation of leadership and management. The headteacher and senior staff provide a clear direction for school improvement and the raising of achievement. This is seen, for example, in the successful achievement of specialist status. Surveys of the opinions of students and parents show that the majority recognise the improvement being seen in the school. Because monitoring is thorough, senior managers have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This has led, for example, to successful new appointments to strengthen senior and middle management. However, although the school improvement plan identifies appropriate objectives, these are not identified in terms of their priority; neither is the impact of monitoring fully evaluated. The full impact of stronger leadership and management has yet to be seen in a rise in test results. Nevertheless, improvements are beginning to be seen in contributory aspects. For example, the more effective use of assessment information for target setting and monitoring students' progress is enabling underachievement to be identified and tackled at an early stage. Action is also being taken to achieve greater consistency in teaching. Developments such as

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these provide the school with good capacity to improve. Governance of the school is good and statutory requirements are met. There are excellent links with other organisations and the school is continuing to develop its links with the community through its specialist school status. Resources are managed well and used effectively.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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>	3	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
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	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

As you will remember, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you what we found. Firstly, however, I would like to thank you for the friendly welcome that most of you gave to us during our time in the school. We greatly appreciated your thoughtful and informative comments and opinions during interviews, in classrooms and around the school. You told us of the many ways in which your school helps you. We found that many of the things that you appreciated about the school were indeed strengths. These include: - Good support from teachers, tutors and heads of year. Adults are generally very supportive and helpful and relationships in the school are good. - Help with understanding the level that you are working at and suggestions as to how to improve your work in order to achieve your best. - A good range of courses to suit your interests and give you more choice. - A range of opportunities in the arts and in business related activities that are not found in most schools. We also believe that there are some ways in which the school might improve even further. Again, these points were raised by students in the school as well as by parents and carers who filled in the questionnaire. They are: - Improving performance by the end of Key Stage 3, in line with the progress that might be expected from Year 6 test results. - Making sure that the learning and teaching approaches that you enjoy in the very best lessons are used consistently across all subject areas. - Engaging learners actively in all lessons, giving you more opportunities to take initiative and responsibility for your own learning. You will realise, from reading these last points, that you have an important part to play in further improving your school. By arriving punctually at lessons, ready to take a full and active part, you can help teachers to make learning more enjoyable. Thank you once again, and we would like to wish the school, and each of you, every success in the future.