

Stanley High School Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104944
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	287077
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Garry Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	867
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dorothy Lee
Headteacher	Mr David Tansey
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002
School address	Fleetwood Road Southport Merseyside PR9 9TF
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Age group	11–16
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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

This is a slightly smaller than average school serving the town of Southport. The school was designated as a specialist college for sport in 2003. It is located in an area with below average levels of social and economic deprivation and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The vast majority of students are of White British origin and there are only a small number of students from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, as is the proportion of students with a statement for special educational needs. The school is a resourced facility for students with physical disabilities.

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 overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it provides satisfactory value for money.

Overall standards are average. Students enter the school with standards that are broadly average and at the end of Key Stage 3 standards remain broadly average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are inconsistent. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C was well above the national average in 2006 and has been for a number of years.

However, the proportion that gains this number of passes including English and mathematics was well below the national average in 2006. This reflected particularly poor achievement in mathematics which the school has addressed vigorously, and initial indicators are that performance will improve in 2007. In addition the number of students attaining the highest grades is well below the national average. The progress made by students is satisfactory, although it is slower in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4.

The standards achieved and the progress made reflect teaching that is satisfactory overall. Although there is a significant proportion of good teaching, this is not sufficient to ensure that all students make good progress. The best teaching engages and challenges students ensuring that they make good progress, but in satisfactory lessons the challenge is too low and progress suffers. Marking is inconsistent and there are too few comments that provide specific advice on how students can improve their work. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has established a system of targets to identify underachievement and to allow intervention. However, the system has yet to be fully embedded and a consistent approach to intervention has not been fully developed.

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of students well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The specialist sports college status has been very effective in extending the range of activities and has made a good contribution to the wider community. The provision for talented students is outstanding, but extending the provision for the most able students remains a priority.

The students' personal development and well-being are good. Students attend school regularly and most enjoy the opportunities provided to them in many lessons and in the range of extra-curricular opportunities. There are many opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community through charity work and through taking on positions of responsibility within the school, for example as peer mentors. Students feel safe in school and value the support available. A significant proportion of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed concerns over behaviour. Generally, behaviour is satisfactory, although in some lessons students do not behave sufficiently well at all times to make good progress. When moving around school some students are not always as considerate of others as they should be.

The care of students is good. There are well established systems to ensure the well-being and safety of students. Students are well known to their team manager and their progress manager, and they know there is someone to turn to if they face difficulties. Students report that when incidents of bullying occur these are usually dealt with promptly and effectively. The support for the most vulnerable students is good and makes effective use of outside agencies.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Although a significant proportion of parents expressed concerns over the leadership of the school the headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school. He is focused on using the sports college status to

raise attainment in all areas. He is supported by a committed senior leadership team. He has made many appropriate changes to structures and processes; however, their impact is not yet fully evident and this means that the proven capacity for improvement is satisfactory rather than good. The benefits of change have not always been communicated to students, parents and staff with sufficient clarity. The self-evaluation of the school accurately identified the strengths and areas for development, but a number of key grades were too high. The governors are supportive, well informed and are fulfilling the role of critical friend effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of students particularly the most able and those in Key Stage 3.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching.
- Ensure that the use of attainment targets is consistent and that students are fully informed of how they can achieve their individual targets.
- Ensure that the benefits of planned change are communicated effectively to all stakeholders to gain their commitment.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students enter the school with broadly average standards. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 2006 students attained standards that were broadly average. However, the proportion of students gaining the highest grades in English was significantly below the national average. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 2006 a well above average proportion of students gained five or more GCSE grades at A* to C. However, the proportion of students gaining this number of subjects including English and mathematics was significantly below the national average. This reflected poor performance in mathematics. The average points score attained by students is very high; however, when it is limited to their best eight subjects it is broadly in line with the national average. Standards of attainment in the individual subjects at GCSE were broadly average in 2006. However, the proportion of students gaining the highest grades was generally well below that found nationally. The overall standards are average.

The achievement of students is satisfactory. The results in 2006 show that the progress made was broadly average. The progress students made in mathematics in 2006 was particularly low, but progress in the subject is now satisfactory. Students make better progress in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. Students with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities achieve in line with their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They attend school regularly and a significant number of students say they enjoy school. Students feel safe in school and trust their teachers to deal effectively with any bullying. Most students have positive attitudes to school, although a minority show too little interest in their learning which limits their attainment. Behaviour is usually satisfactory in lessons and around school. Most students are cooperative, collaborate well and have good relationships with staff and each other. However, there is too

much low-level disruption in a small number of classes and the movement of students around school is not always as disciplined as it should be. Students demonstrate a good understanding of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle thanks to the great emphasis the school places on physical development. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies and religious education lessons encourage thoughtful and caring attitudes, as demonstrated in an excellent Year 9 debate on family values. Students respond extremely well to opportunities to show initiative or take responsibility and many serve as year or school council members, or as prefects or peer mentors. They also make good contributions to charities and enrich the community through involvement in sporting activities and musical productions. Work-related learning is a strength of the school and students are equipped with appropriate skills, particularly in information and communication technology, to provide them with a good foundation for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although there is a significant amount of teaching that is good, there is not enough to ensure that all students make good progress. In the most effective lessons teachers have good subject expertise and plan a variety of approaches that secure students' interest. In these lessons students enjoy their work and, because the work is well matched to differing needs, there is a good level of pace and challenge. In less effective lessons the teacher dominates and provides too few opportunities for students to think for themselves. Consequently, students become too passive, show little enthusiasm for learning and at times misbehave. In almost all lessons relationships are positive so learning takes place in an harmonious atmosphere. However, in a very small number of lessons teachers do not have sufficient student management skills to meet the challenge of a small number of disruptive students. The quality of marking of students' work is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and improving. All statutory requirements are met and the curriculum at both key stages is appropriately broad and balanced to meet the needs of students. More vocational courses are being introduced into Key Stage 4 and there is already an effective link with the local college of further education to provide vocational education. The school has gained approval for the delivery of a new specialist diploma in the creative and media studies in 2009. Effective work-related learning is delivered through personal, social and health education and a compulsory work experience programme.

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities throughout the school is good. The curriculum provision for gifted and talented students is at an early stage of development in the school as a whole, but there are some examples of very good practice in the area of physical education. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is being reviewed and modified to meet the needs of more able students more effectively.

The sports college status has had a positive impact in physical education and education for healthy living and is now beginning to support developments in teaching, learning and personal development throughout the school. A large number of students participate in extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Facilities for physical education and sport have been greatly improved

allowing more students, including those with physical disabilities, to benefit from them. Transition arrangements with local feeder primary schools are already good and these are further enhanced through the sports college's community provision and the sharing of modern languages teachers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Although, arrangement for care and support are good, academic guidance is only satisfactory. Pastoral staff, including the mentors attached to each house, know the students well and provide effective support and encouragement. Staff encourage students to keep safe and be healthy, aided by significant improvements in the healthy eating options available at lunchtimes. The newly appointed attendance officer carefully monitors all students, including those looked after by the local authority, and acts effectively to support students with poor attendance. Students are given good support and guidance when making option and career choices. As a result, they are able to make well informed decisions and high numbers participate in education or training after leaving school. The school's Guidance Network provides a good range of support for students with additional needs. Support is sensitive, well coordinated, and effective in promoting the well-being of students, particularly the most vulnerable. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are in place, and procedures for child protection are well established and understood by staff.

There is an academic tracking system which is monitored systematically by the progress managers. However, the system is at an early stage of development and is not being operated consistently in all subjects. It is not yet having a consistent impact. Many students know their target levels, but are not as confident about how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and is focused on raising attainment. He is well supported by a committed senior leadership team. There have been many significant changes to processes and structures within the school over the last two years, but these are not sufficiently embedded to have impacted consistently on outcomes. These include the creation of a broader senior leadership team to enhance the role of middle managers in planning for improvement. The communication of the value of these developments to staff, students and parents has not been consistently effective. There are good systems for monitoring performance through observations of teaching and detailed analysis of data, but these have not yet brought about significant improvements in overall achievement. However, there are examples where intervention has led to improvement in attainment, as in mathematics. The process of self-review has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school; however, the involvement of all stakeholders is underdeveloped and the majority of grades were too high. The governors are well led by an experienced chair. They are supportive of the school, well informed and are robust in challenging the school to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

You will remember that a team of inspectors recently visited your school. Thank you for your willingness to talk to us about your work and to give us your views on the school. I am writing to you to tell you what we found.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education and has some good features. Although a large number of students gain five or more grades at A* to C at GCSE, the number who gain the highest grades is too low. We judge that overall you make satisfactory progress. The teaching is satisfactory overall, but a significant amount of teaching is good and challenges you to achieve high standards. You all have targets for your work which gives you a clear focus, but many of you are not clear about what you have to do to achieve these in all subjects.

Your teachers and the other staff in the school know you well and they care for you effectively. You feel safe and you told us that if there is any bullying it is normally dealt with promptly and effectively. You attend school regularly and many of you say you enjoy school. You generally get on well with each other and with your teachers. Your behaviour is satisfactory overall; this is because in some lessons a minority of you do not enjoy your learning and behave in ways which distracts others from learning. At times when you are moving around school, some of you do not take sufficient care to be considerate to others. The range of courses you are offered and the wide range of extra-curricular activities is good. The opportunities you have to live healthy lives through the sporting and PE activities are very good and you make good use of them.

Your headteacher and his senior colleagues are working hard to improve the school. They are well supported by the governing body. They have put in place many changes to improve the school such as your targets and the house system, but these are not yet fully in place and having the full effect on standards.

We have asked the school to help you to make greater progress by making all of the teaching good and giving you clear advice on what you have to do to reach your targets. We have also asked that you and your parents and all the staff are told more clearly about any planned changes and why they are occurring. You can help in this by ensuring that all of you behave well and work hard.