

Stanley High School Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104944
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	336393
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Harrison HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	867
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dorothy Lee
Headteacher	Mr David Tansey
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 36 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including department evaluations, students' workbooks and 184 parental questionnaires, as well as questionnaires completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent of students' progress against their starting points on joining the school
- the impact of measures to improve the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection
- the behaviour of students.

Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average school serving the town of Southport. It has specialist status in sports. In terms of social and economic levels of deprivation, the school serves an area close to the national average. The vast majority of students are White British. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school is a resourced facility for students with physical disabilities. The school offers extended facilities to parents and the wider community, notably its sports facilities, and there is a youth club on site.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Since its last inspection, Stanley High has improved aspects of its provision but the pace of change has been too slow in some areas. The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades in GCSE, with English and mathematics included, has risen significantly and in 2009 was slightly above the national average. Students make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in some subjects. At the last inspection, students were not making sufficient progress in mathematics; action to address this has been slow but there is evidence of recent improvement. Student behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Students feel safe in the school, they get on well together and the majority show a good level of understanding of other people. Students are developing a satisfactory range of skills to prepare them for their future and a higher than average number progress into post-16 education or training.

Attendance is good because most students enjoy coming to school and many take part in a range of extra-curricular activities. Work to improve the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection is having an impact but the pace of change has been too slow. Inspectors found almost half the lessons to be good. Almost all the rest were satisfactory but could be improved further. The curriculum of the school is constantly reviewed and successfully meets the needs of students. Care, guidance and support have improved and are now good.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There has been recent strengthening of the senior leadership team and management of the core subjects. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for further development. Actions are in place to bring about further improvement but these are not always monitored sufficiently. Safeguarding procedures and partnership working are strong features of the school. There is satisfactory promotion of equality of opportunity but not enough effective action to ensure individuals reach their maximum potential. Communication with parents and carers, and with staff, has improved since the last inspection but a small minority of parents still express some dissatisfaction with aspects of leadership and management.

The school provides satisfactory value for money. Based on the secure improvements it has made in some areas since the last inspection, and more recent changes that are beginning to have an impact, there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the level of progress students make in mathematics by ensuring that

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recent improvements are sustained and developed further.

- Further increase the proportion of teaching and learning that is good or better by ensuring all lessons include learning activities that are tailored to the needs of different individuals or groups in the class, and by more frequent checks on learning in lessons.
- Increase the level of rigour and frequency in monitoring the impact of actions taken to bring about improvements in the school.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. The quality of learning in lessons is satisfactory overall and good in some subjects, including the school's specialism. Students enter the school with prior attainment that is around the national average and make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 11. In 2009, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades in GCSE, including English and mathematics, was 53%. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. One of the main issues for the school at the last inspection was to raise the achievement of the most able students. The proportion of students gaining high grades has increased and the appointment of a coordinator for this work in September 2009 is having a positive impact with the current cohort of students.

The impact of actions to improve student progress in the core subjects has been inconsistent. In science, curriculum changes led to significant improvements in 2009 and English also showed improved outcomes in that year. In mathematics there were still too many students not making the expected levels of progress in 2009. However, in the current year, students are making satisfactory progress in all three subjects. Inspectors found evidence for this in lessons observed and grades students have already gained, for example, in modular examinations in mathematics.

Student behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Students feel safe in the school; they get on well together and the majority show good levels of respect for others. The impact of the sports specialism is evident in the progress students are making in adopting healthy lifestyles, including exercise and healthy eating. They make a good contribution to the life of the school and the local community. They participate well in a wide range of roles that give them responsibility, such as sports leaders and peer mentors. They are involved in staff appointments and other decision making processes, such as changes to catering arrangements and to the school uniform. They are developing good work related skills and satisfactory numeracy and literacy skills to prepare them for future careers, and a high proportion stay on in post-16 education or training.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are improving but the rate of change since the last inspection has been too slow. Inspectors found good or better teaching and learning in just under half the lessons. Almost all other lessons were satisfactory but could be improved further. One of the continuing issues for the school to address is teaching that does not take sufficient account of the different levels of ability or learning styles within the group. In these lessons the same tasks are set for all, which limits the progress made by some learners. Another issue is that students do not take sufficient responsibility for their own learning and merely comply with what is asked of them rather than strive to reach their full potential. The third aspect that is not present often enough in the satisfactory lessons is regular assessment to determine what students have understood. In the better examples, assessment is well used to shape the rest of the lesson. There are many lessons which do engage and motivate students and where their progress is carefully monitored. This includes the school's specialism but there are examples across a wide range of other subjects. In a science lesson, for example, students learned about genetics through looking at differences between themselves and others; the teacher's skill at behaviour management and checking understanding ensured students made good progress as well as enjoying the learning. Many other successful lessons were observed by inspectors. This good practice is not yet shared sufficiently across the whole school.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The curriculum continues to be a strength of the school. It is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of students. There has been extensive work within the school, and with other partners, to develop the range of options available to Key Stage 4 students and they benefit from a range of vocational as well as academic courses. Within Key Stage 3, the school has developed specialist provision known as the 'gold groups' to ensure vulnerable students who need additional help receive an appropriate curriculum to prepare them for integration within different subjects. The curriculum focuses well on the personal development of students as well as their academic needs. Extra-curricular provision is particularly extensive within the school's sports specialism, but there is also a good range of other activities and visits that students enjoy. Some of these are delivered with external partners, such as the Youth Service involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. A few students said they would welcome more external specialist input, for example, for drama activities.

The strengths in the quality of care, guidance and support that were identified at the last inspection have been maintained and developed further. Two aspects are particularly strong. The first is the house system, which places students of different ages together in form groups. When this was first introduced, there was some uncertainty amongst students about how well it would work but it is now very popular. It gives students a sense of belonging and they enjoy the healthy inter-house competitions that take place. An online system is in use whereby rewards and sanctions are quickly recorded and this enables students to see how well their group is doing against others. Older students support younger ones very well and there is a good level of pastoral support from staff, supplemented by specialists from external agencies where appropriate. A new system of recording the progress of individual students has been implemented since the last inspection, though there is not enough evaluation of its impact. The second key strength is the guidance provided for students as they make the transition into and out of the school. New students settle quickly. Older students are very positive about the levels of information and guidance they receive to help them choose post-16 options, though a small number of parents would like to see this strengthened further. Support for students with special education needs and/or disabilities is good and these students progress as well, and sometimes better, than the rest of the cohort. A few parents would like to see increased support for students with dyslexia.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

There is a clear focus within the school on raising the levels of student achievement. The headteacher and senior leadership team recognise that improving the quality of teaching and learning is the key to success. Although the pace of change since the last inspection has not been fast enough in all areas, there is evidence of improvement, including a steady rise in the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades in GCSE, including English and mathematics, and in the behaviour of students. Key appointments in core subjects are beginning to make a positive difference. The deputy headteacher appointed in 2008 is providing strong leadership for the drive to improve further the quality of teaching and learning. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. However, monitoring of the impact of actions taken to bring about improvement is not sufficiently regular or rigorous.

The governing body carries out its statutory responsibilities effectively and provides a satisfactory level of challenge to the senior team, but recognises the need for a greater sense of urgency in the pace of change. Engagement with parents and carers, and with staff, was an issue at the last inspection and this has improved. The majority of parents express satisfaction with the school, though a small minority are not content with aspects of leadership and management. Similarly, a small group of staff continue to be opposed to some of the changes taking place at the school.

Partnership working is strong in many ways. It enables the school to provide a good curriculum for its students and there are strong links with external agencies involved in care, guidance and support. The safeguarding of students takes a high priority in the school and systems in place to promote this are good. The promotion of equality of opportunity and community cohesion are both satisfactory. Strengths include work within subjects to develop students' understanding of and respect for individuals and for different cultures. Students from different backgrounds get on well together in the school and there are some links with other communities to widen their experience. Work on equality of opportunity has not yet impacted sufficiently in terms of ensuring individual needs are met in all lessons.

Resources are well managed and deployed. The school provides a clean, welcoming environment and investment in equipment to support learning, including information and communication technology, is good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Based on the evidence of completed questionnaires, parents and carers are more positive about the school than at the time of the last inspection. A significant majority say their child is enjoying school and making progress and that behaviour is good. There is also greater support for leadership and management, although a quarter of respondents would like to see more account taken of their suggestions and greater input from the school on how parents and carers can support their child.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stanley High School Sports College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 184 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 867 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	25	106	58	25	14	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	48	26	127	69	4	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	30	100	54	18	10	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	22	98	53	26	14	13	7
The teaching is good at this school	25	14	124	67	21	11	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	10	101	55	41	22	9	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	14	118	64	27	15	4	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	15	106	58	22	12	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	17	110	60	24	13	9	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	15	114	62	25	14	11	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	11	100	54	36	20	9	5
The school is led and managed effectively	20	11	104	57	22	12	19	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	20	106	58	20	11	7	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Students

Inspection of Stanley High School Sports College, Southport PR9 9TF

As you know we recently inspected your school and I am writing to tell you our findings. Thank you for your help in showing us round the school and telling us your views.

We think you make good progress in some of your lessons and satisfactory progress in others. More students are gaining five or more grades A* to C in GCSE, including English and mathematics, than at the last inspection but we think you could make even more progress in mathematics. We were impressed by the behaviour of the majority of students, especially considering the snow conditions which meant you had to stay in at breaks. It was also good to see above average attendance at the school and how many of you enjoy the activities you take part in outside lessons. We think you are developing a range of skills that will help you when you leave school and it was good to see the high proportion of students that carry on their education or training at 16. Like you, we think the house system is working really well and you told us about the good levels of support you receive from the school. We would like to see you take more responsibility for your own learning so that you try and achieve to the best of your ability in all lessons. We have asked the headteacher to improve the school further by:

- ensuring that recent improvements in mathematics are sustained so that you make good progress
- making sure that learning activities meet the needs of different individuals and groups of learners in all lessons and that teachers check regularly whether you understand the topic
- checking that actions to improve the school further are working.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sue Harrison

HMI

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