

Tupton Hall School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112933
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	338053
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Gwen Coates 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1918
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Skinner
Headteacher	Mr Patrick Cook
Date of previous school inspection	0 June 2007
School address	Station New Road Old Tupton Chesterfield
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 61 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body meetings, the single central record and other policies and records relating to safeguarding. They analysed attendance and exclusion data, school data on the 2009 examination results, current data on students' performance and the completed parental, student and staff questionnaires that were submitted.

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

- how consistently the school's behaviour management policy is implemented in all lessons and around the school so that students' attitudes to learning improve
- the extent to which data on students' progress informs the planning of teaching and learning at class teacher and faculty levels
- the extent to which teaching in all subjects and key stages engages and motivates students and supports and challenges all abilities in order to improve learning and progress
- how rigorous is the process for tracking students' progress (in all key stages) and for intervening when appropriate, and how well integrated this is at faculty and year group levels
- the extent to which middle leaders are accountable for the quality of teaching, learning and support in their areas of responsibility.

Information about the school

Tupton Hall School is a very large school. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. The percentage of students who are eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average and the percentage of those with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

Tupton Hall School is a specialist sports and information communication technology (ICT) college. It is the hub site for the North East Derbyshire School Sport Partnership and works in partnership with the Chesterfield Learning Community and the Alfreton Vocational Academy. The school has gained the Sportsmark, ICT mark and Healthy Schools awards, the Financial Management Standard and Investors in People. It is currently working towards the International Schools Award.

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

Tupton Hall is a satisfactory school with a number of good features. The decision to restructure and enlarge the leadership team has led to a number of significant improvements that are having a positive and sustained impact on outcomes for students. Improvements in care, guidance and support and, in particular, improvements to the behaviour management policy and strategies to support students' attendance at school have led to improved behaviour in the classroom and around the school, reductions in the number of fixed term exclusions and improved attendance. A clear focus on monitoring the quality of teaching and of providing effective professional development is leading to improvements in teaching. Improved systems to monitor students' progress are enabling teachers to identify underachievement and to provide appropriate support to students when they need it. All of these changes are steadily raising students' attainment and improving the rate of progress they make.

Students have a good understanding of the importance of, and how to lead, healthy lifestyles and are encouraged in this by the range of activities that result from the school's specialist sports college status. There were many examples of how well students in all key stages contribute to both the school and the wider community.

A strength of the school is how well it works in partnership with others. This is evident in the effective partnerships with other schools and colleges that enable the school to provide a broad curriculum that meets the needs of all students effectively. It is also evident in the sometimes exceptional support provided for vulnerable students as a result of strong partnerships with a range of external agencies. The strong partnerships that the school forges in relation to its specialist sports and ICT college status have a positive impact on achievement.

Recent appointments to the leadership team and the empowering of middle leaders indicate the improved capacity the school now has for sustained improvement. Leaders know the school well, have a very clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and have accurately identified the main priorities for improvement. Recognising that students' attainment is low and that progress is only satisfactory, they have introduced a range of well thought out initiatives, tighter monitoring systems and sharper but simple improvement strategies since the last inspection and these are already having a clear impact in improving provision and raising attainment. Some of these systems are not yet fully embedded so that their impact on students' outcomes are maximised. For example, new academic monitoring systems are in place across all faculties to ensure early identification of underachievement but consistent systems for pastoral monitoring are not yet as well developed or fully integrated with this. The school recognises that it is on a journey and it still has much more to do. Although teaching and learning are

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improving steadily, certain aspects, such as the quality of questioning in lessons, the extent to which students acquire independent learning skills and how well learning activities challenge students of all abilities are not yet sufficiently strong to ensure students make good progress in their learning. Almost all lessons observed included assessment to support learning but as yet such practice is not effectively integrated with learning activities so that progress is speeded up.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment and the rate at which all students make progress in their learning by ensuring that:
 - all students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning and thus develop their independent learning skills
 - learning activities within lessons are better targeted in order to meet the specific needs of students of differing abilities
 - the use of assessment to support learning is refined so that it is effectively integrated with learning activities in order to speed up progress
 - questioning is used effectively in all lessons to probe students' understanding, to challenge their thinking and to provide them with opportunities to contribute
- Embed the new systems for monitoring and evaluating students' progress so that pastoral and academic support is fully integrated and ensures that, for all students, underachievement is identified early and intervention put in place promptly.

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

Students enjoy their learning and their achievement is satisfactory. Overall students' attainment is low. However, the gap between their attainment and the national average is closing and, for the last three years, there has been a trend of steady improvement in attainment at the end of Year 11. This upward trend continued in summer 2009 and current school monitoring data suggests that further improvement in attainment is likely to occur in summer 2010.

Overall students make satisfactory progress given their starting points and a small number of students make good progress. This is confirmed by data on students' achievement over time and by the learning that took place in lessons observed by inspectors. Like the standards students attain, the progress they make has been improving steadily. The progress of individual groups of students is often better than overall levels of progress. Although small in number in this very large school, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, students from minority ethnic backgrounds and looked after children make at least satisfactory progress and some make good progress.

Students say they feel safe in school and are encouraged to adopt safe procedures. This

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is supported by the fact that 90% of responses to the parental questionnaire were positive about the extent to which the school keeps their child safe. Although a number of parents were critical of how the school dealt with bullying, students say that bullying is rare and, when it does occur, staff deal with it promptly and effectively.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory. The main concern in responses to the parental questionnaire was about behaviour. Responses to the student questionnaire in relation to behaviour were mixed. Older students indicated that they had had concerns in the past but that behaviour was now much better. Younger students and those new to the school had few concerns. This supports inspectors' judgement that improvements to the behaviour management policy and the consistency with which it is being implemented is having a significantly positive impact on behaviour. Students are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and understand the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse. They speak positively about the sports provision and their good participation in extra curricular sport indicates that many actively pursue healthy lifestyles. Students know the difference between right and wrong. They are able to work productively in groups and are aware of different cultures and how these contribute to society. Students are keen to participate in activities that contribute to the school and the wider community. They enjoy taking on responsibility, for example as sports leaders, in raising money for charity or in teaching a foreign language in local primary schools. The school council feels that the school listens to their comments and their contribution to decision making leads to improvements.

Students' attendance has improved significantly and is now average. Students speak highly of opportunities for work experience and of careers advice and most responses to the parental questionnaire were positive about the way the school prepares students for their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

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

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	
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

While much teaching is good, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching indicate that overall it is satisfactory. Common strengths in teaching and learning include:

- the relationships between teachers and students
- students' positive attitudes to learning
- the support teachers provide to students on an individual basis

Inconsistent practice is evident in the use of questioning, which does not always challenge students sufficiently or give them enough opportunities to show what they can do. Although differentiated levels and targets are identified and talked through with students, the learning activities they are asked to carry out are often uniform and don't attempt to challenge students of different abilities. Although assessment to support learning is used extensively in lessons, the balance between assessment and learning activities is not well maintained and as a result it is not yet used formatively to advance learning. Marking and the written feedback students receive about their work varies too much, both in its regularity and its quality.

The curriculum covers all the required areas and meets the needs of all students. It provides opportunities for those who are identified as gifted and talented to develop their leadership skills and supports those students who are less able or more vulnerable. It is constantly developing and is beginning to have an impact on raising attainment. Partnerships significantly enhance the curriculum at Key Stage 4, ensuring that students have access to a range of vocational courses. Clear procedures are in place for monitoring the performance and quality of provision for learners engaged in such off-site courses. There is a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities.

Transition arrangements for Year 7 students are good and additional support, for example an extra day in school, is provided for those students who are identified as more vulnerable. Good strategies are in place to improve attendance and behaviour and their consistent application is having a positive impact on students' outcomes in these areas. The Enhanced Learning Faculty provides students with outstanding support in helping them to improve their academic and social skills and vulnerable students speak highly of the care they receive. There is careful co-ordination of the work of outside agencies. Careers education begins in Year 9 and students receive good information and guidance in relation to their curriculum choices in Key Stage 4.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The restructured and expanded leadership team has brought about a change in the pace of improvement. With the support of the pro-active governing body, they are moving the school forward, promoting ambition among staff and students, raising expectations and ensuring that attainment and progress are improving steadily. Targets used to raise standards are appropriate and based upon informed and considered judgments. All targets related to the specialist sports and ICT status are met. Middle leaders are committed to raising achievement and outcomes within their areas of responsibilities and are embracing enthusiastically the more rigorous and consistent systems that are being put in place.

All statutory requirements and relevant policies in relation to safeguarding are in place and there are no shortcomings in the use and management of the school's resources. Governors play an integral part in determining the strategic direction of the school and are knowledgeable and well informed about barriers to learning, such as attendance and behaviour, and the importance of enhancing links with parents. They bring specialist skills to their work with the school and are visible in the school and in the community.

The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination. It has good information about the individual groups of students it serves and evaluates this carefully. In particular it is exploring in detail aspects of deprivation and how this affects students' performance in order to ensure support is well targeted. The school has identified where further improvement can be made to overcome remaining variations and has begun to put in place appropriate strategies to tackle this. The school has a good understanding of its context and recognises that the lack of cultural, faith and linguistic diversity within the school population means that it has a greater responsibility to ensure students learn about wider communities including global communities. It has identified clearly the multi-layered communities of which it is a part and actively promotes community cohesion through its partnerships, and particularly its specialist college work. Its ability to evaluate the impact of its work in this area is developing.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

All students make the progress expected given their starting points and some make good progress. There is no significant difference between the performance of different groups of students. Most students achieve the grades they need to enter higher education. Students play a big part in the learning community of the school, acting as reading buddies, mentoring students lower down the school, running clubs and sports activities. They are also involved in the local community, for example, organising a senior citizens social event and working in a local play scheme.

Although teaching is effective it is not always well targeted at the differing abilities of students. However, assessment to support learning is good and students know their target grades and their current achievement levels. Most marking is thorough, with useful recommendations for improvement. Monitoring and tracking of students' progress is good. The curriculum is good and, through the school's membership of the Chesterfield Learning Community, students can access all level 2 and 3 courses from partner schools and colleges. A range of enrichment activities is available, including sports qualifications and a young enterprise scheme. Pastoral support for students is good and they are well supported in their transition to further or higher education or employment. There is strong leadership in the sixth form and the vision of promoting excellence and achievement is shared by teachers and students.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

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Views of parents and carers

A total of 347 completed questionnaires were returned within the deadline. The responses suggested a generally positive relationship between parents and carers and the school. Parents' and carers' main concern was with behaviour in the school. Inspectors recognised this but, as noted elsewhere in the report, judged that the strategies that are now in place are having a significant impact on improving behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tupton Hall School 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 347 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1918 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	29	183	60	24	8	6	2
The school keeps my child safe	82	27	191	63	21	7	7	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	84	28	175	57	27	9	7	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	82	27	164	54	37	12	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	59	19	197	65	31	10	5	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	14	178	58	55	18	10	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	18	183	60	44	14	9	3
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)	62	20	182	60	27	9	4	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	71	23	187	61	28	9	8	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	18	153	50	56	18	23	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	13	159	52	63	21	12	4
The school is led and managed effectively	48	16	187	62	38	13	16	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	39	84	39	35	16	10	5

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



21 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Tupton Hall School, Chesterfield, S42 6LG

Thank you to the many students inspectors met during the inspection of your school.

Inspectors judged Tupton Hall to be a satisfactory school with a number of good features. Recent changes to the leadership team have led to a number of significant improvements in the school. For example, as a result of more effective strategies, students' behaviour in school and attendance at school have improved. Teaching is improving and the way the school monitors your progress is more rigorous. The curriculum you are offered is good - there are plenty of options to suit your needs because of the partnership with Chesterfield Learning Community. The care, guidance and support you are offered is good and sometimes very good for those of you in greatest need. As a result, the attainment of students at the end of Year 11 has been improving steadily for the last three years.

Despite these improvements, the leadership team recognise that much more still needs to be done. Inspectors agree with this and have asked the school to focus on the following issues in order to ensure that the rate at which you make progress is more rapid and thus your attainment improves further:

Improve teaching and learning further by ensuring that the quality of questioning in lessons improves, that you are encouraged to develop better independent learning skills, that lessons stretch and challenge all of you regardless of your ability and that teachers use assessment to support your learning more effectively

Ensure that your performance in school is monitored carefully and in an integrated way both within faculties and within your year groups

You can help your teachers and the leadership team improve the progress you make by behaving well at all times, attending school regularly and taking an active interest in all your lessons and in your own progress and achievement.

Best wishes for all your futures

Gwen Coates

Her Majesty's Inspector

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