

Sir Thomas Boughhey High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124393
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340558
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Michelle Parker 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	753
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Hopkins
Headteacher	Mr David Boston
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 27 lessons, meetings were held with parents, groups of students, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at :the school's improvement plan, safeguarding policies and documentation, the tracking of students' progress, individual action plans (IEPs) of a number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, minutes of governors' meetings, 196 parental questionnaires, 100 student questionnaires and 25 staff questionnaires.

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

- the progress of students with special educational needs and/or difficulties and those who are eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after to ensure they made at least satisfactory progress across both key stages and that teaching is sufficiently challenging
- higher attaining students in both key stages to ensure they achieve their potential and are sufficiently challenged
- the impact of the school's specialism to raise standards in the school and its impact on the community to raise aspirations
- the capacity of the leadership and management of the school to move it to outstanding.

Information about the school

Sir Thomas Boughey High School and Co-operative Business College is a specialist

- business and enterprise college associated with the Co-operative movement. The
- proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Nearly all students are of White British heritage and almost all students have English as their first language. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is in slightly higher than the national average but the proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Students join the school with lower than average standards.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school that constantly strives for excellence in all it does. The passion and enthusiasm of the headteacher for the school and education are shared equally by staff and students alike. Parents are overwhelmingly confident with the school and their children's education. One parent said, 'I can't say enough good things, the teachers, support workers and dinner time helpers are excellent.' The school's specialism of business studies and the Cooperative movement's support chime with its ethos of equality, fairness and sustainability, and permeate all that it does. It has used its specialism strategically to improve opportunities for all its students and the local community. Consequently, increasing numbers of students progress to the next stage of education.

All students, including looked after students, those who have free school meals and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, attain well and make good progress, and some students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. In 2009, 81% of students gained 5A*-C GCSE grades. This included 65% gaining 5A*-C in English and mathematics. In addition, students participate in a wide range of young enterprise activities as 'true workers' co-operatives', thereby embedding fair-trade practices and sustainability and the development of effective business skills. These reinforce strong moral and social understanding. They also gain qualifications in information communication and technology. In consequence, they are excellently prepared for their future economic well being.

The school has worked with rigour to address the two points for development in the previous report, and has been quick to follow up the recommendations of the survey visit to ensure the professional development of all staff. This positions the school very strongly to sustain improvement. The school is supported by the well led and highly competent governing body. Monitoring at all levels is embedded in the school's practices and its improvement plans, but the senior team recognises that this is not always as formalised as it needs to be to ensure maximum impact.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Many aspects of the school's rigorous approach in this area are models of good practice.

The curriculum is outstanding. Innovative approaches capture students' interest, and careful matching of provision to individual students' needs builds their confidence as learners. At Key Stage 4 the range of academic and vocational courses offered maintains students' interest and provides appropriate challenge to meet the needs of all.

Teaching is at least good, and several lessons seen were outstanding. But sometimes teachers are too cautious and limit the opportunities for students' independent learning.

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Students enjoy learning and rise to the challenge to think about and discuss complex ideas.

Opportunities for spiritual, cultural and moral considerations are outstanding. The school recognises the value of these to a community that is mainly White British and because of this uses its links through the Co-operative movement to meet students from other faiths and backgrounds in Britain and around the world. Consequently students appreciate and value differences between their and others' culture and faith.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure monitoring information is more formally recorded and used by staff in their planning and assessing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Attainment in 2008 at the end of Key Stage 4 dipped, to 68% 5A*-C grades from the previous year's 79%. The school worked speedily to address weaknesses, and in 2009 standards rose again to well above the national average of 61%. Learning in lessons is good. Students are highly motivated and understand their targets. The school continues to work effectively in exceeding its own challenging targets. Careful monitoring of all students coupled with timely and tailored interventions promotes students' progress. The school's data indicate that students are on track to perform well this year.

Students' excellent behaviour and attitudes around the site and in lessons makes a significant contribution to the warm and friendly atmosphere of the school. It enables teachers to teach and on the rare occasions where behaviour does not match the high expectations of the school it is dealt with quickly, thereby minimising any potential disruption.

Bullying in school is extremely rare and is dealt with promptly; this ensures that students feel confident and safe in school. They respect and value each other and consequently congregating in the cramped dining room at lunchtimes is a harmonious experience. Excellent relationships between staff and students encourage students to talk to adults in the school when they have worries.

The extent to which students contribute to the school and community is outstanding. Specialist status reinforces and extends links with local schools, the community, business and higher education. An example of this was the attendance of students at the annual Co-operative Congress, listening to key note speakers of national standing and acting as trainers to other delegates.

The school's strong ethos has helped students develop clear personal values. It is underpinned by the regular whole school assemblies. These effectively develop students' understanding and awareness of complex moral and social issues. The work carried out as part of the Holocaust Memorial week led to an understanding of the issues facing asylum seekers in Britain today and further strengthened students' attitude of valuing people's differences.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' subject knowledge is used to good effect to plan interesting lessons and in the best cases, skilfully, when it is used to question and assess students' understanding which promotes good progress. In a Year 11 English lesson, students used the examination board's mark scheme to analyse a past answer, mark it and justify the mark. The teacher's questioning ensured that students really understood the answer and what they needed to do to improve their own work. Marking of students' work is often constructive and the school is aware that it is sometimes of variable quality between teachers and does not always give clear guidance on how to improve, together with opportunities to practise. Where teachers are sufficiently confident, students are self directed and highly independent learners pursuing their own questions and investigations. Levels of group work and co-operative learning are strong features in all lessons. Information and communication technology is one of a wide range of resources that facilitates effective learning.

The school provides an outstanding curriculum, by 'putting co-operation into the curriculum'. The school's specialism impacts both within and beyond specialist subjects.

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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All areas audit their contribution to developing students' business and enterprise skills and knowledge, thus embedding the enterprise culture across the whole school. Students gain from a wide range of opportunities and memorable experiences, including trips abroad to work with other co-operative groups to study local issues. The school has been at the forefront in developing appropriate accreditation via ASDAN and 'Cope' programmes. These ensure that students who would not traditionally gain a qualification do so. The school has also recognised the need to increase the challenge for higher attaining students and introduced AS modules.

Care, guidance and support are highly tailored to meet the needs of individuals and ensure high levels of effective interagency work to support students. The school plays to its strength as a small and caring community by responding quickly to needs and communicating well with parents and students. This includes strong links to feeder primaries which are visited by the head of year as well as ex-pupils. The new intake taster day, plus additional sessions for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, helps to familiarise students with their new school and secures a confident start.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management at all levels are very strong. This has ensured that all staff understand and share the ethos of the school and work tirelessly to improve it. Heads of department take an active role in promoting improvement. Monitoring throughout the school is effective and is part of the school's good habits in responding to teachers' and students' needs and evaluating its work, although it is not always formally recorded. One example of effective evaluation is the sharpening up of staff development. There is no longer a 'one size fits all' approach. Performance development is tightly aligned to school and departmental development plans. The menu of staff training available both in house and externally reflects these complex needs. The school has a culture of sharing best practice coupled with an 'open door' policy whereby staff observe each others' lessons to share and learn from each other.

Governors have a robust understanding of the school. They are highly effective critical friends, listening and responding effectively to parents. They use their professional expertise to good effect both in supporting the school and holding it to account. The role of community governors has been developed well to enhance the skills of the governing body and add expertise.

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Safeguarding is robust. Procedures and policies are regularly updated. All staff are appropriately trained.

This is very inclusive school which strives to 'go the extra mile' and supports and helps students to achieve their potential. There are no exclusions. Promoting equalities and tackling discrimination are at the heart of the school's ethos. Parents said they valued this and were confident that the school did its best by their children.

Community cohesion is a strength of the school and is integral to its specialism of business and the Co-operative movement. This has helped the school develop strong links locally, nationally and internationally. It is part of all the school does, and ranges widely from, for example, supporting local families in need; to providing information communication and technology support to local primary schools; to developing friendship links with a mainly Muslim school in Manchester and working with partners in Lesotho.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Both parents who were interviewed and those who completed questionnaires were overwhelming positive about the school. Inspectors followed up the concerns of a couple of parents with regard to the school contacting parents promptly in response to issues raised by parents. No evidence was found to support these views. One parent was concerned about site security. Inspectors noted the school had carefully thought through procedures to ensure the safety of both students and staff at all times. The school is also in the process of strengthening this further through the issuing of name

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badges which are to be worn at all times.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sir Thomas Boughey High 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 196 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 753 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	31	124	62	9	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	110	55	86	43	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	77	39	112	56	7	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	91	46	104	52	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	85	43	109	55	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	28	121	61	9	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	28	130	65	9	5	0	0
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)	72	36	111	56	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	34	125	63	6	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	90	45	98	49	5	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	26	121	61	12	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	88	44	106	53	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	94	47	99	50	3	2	0	0

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.



Friday 5 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Sir Thomas Boughey High School, Stoke on Trent, ST7 8AP

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team and your contribution. We were impressed by how smart you all looked in your uniforms, your courtesy to us, your maturity and behaviour to each other and the staff. It was very helpful hearing your views. We agree with you that you go to an outstanding school. We appreciate why you are justly proud of your school and all your achievements.

The leadership of your headteacher is exemplary and his passion for your education and well being is shared equally by all the staff. You are a good team. The development of the school as a business and enterprise college with the Co-operative movement has enriched your education and provided you with some world class experiences, for example in travelling abroad and representing your school nationally at the Co-operative Congress. You achieve well at school. We were impressed by the successes of last year's Year 11, in gaining 81% 5A*-C grades at GCSE. You are working hard in lessons and teachers provide you with good feedback, with increasing opportunities to work independently and as part of a group. Teachers evaluate their work but they do not always record that evaluation; we have asked them to do this so that they make sure they can use this information to help their planning and assessing of your learning.

We were pleased to hear how you enjoy school and how you have worked hard to improve your attendance at school.

We wish you continued success in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker

Her Majesty's Inspector

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