

Chasetown Specialist Sports College

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 124469 |
| Local Authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 340580 |
| Inspection dates | 11–12 November 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Rob Hubbleday HMI |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Comprehensive |
| School category | Foundation |
| 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 | 895 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 124 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Maddocks |
| Headteacher | Bernice Astling |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 April 2007 |
| School address | Pool Road Burntwood Staffordshire |
| Telephone number | 01543 685828 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 34 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, senior staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the development plan, monitoring records, the minutes of governing body meetings and other documentation provided by the school. The responses to staff and pupil questionnaires were considered as well as 226 parental questionnaires.

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

- the attention given in lessons to gifted and talented students, middle-attaining girls and students with special educational needs
- the extent to which changes in the curriculum are supporting improvements in achievement
- the school's analysis of the progress made by students in the sixth form.

Information about the school

Chasetown Specialist Sports College gained specialist status in 2004. Virtually all of the students are of White British origin. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with special educational needs. The school has gained various awards, including Healthy Schools' status, Artsmark Silver, Sportsmark and International School Award at foundation level. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2008. A new deputy headteacher is due to take up post in January 2010.

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?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****1**

Main findings

The College began to make improvements after its last inspection but the pace has quickened remarkably in the last 12 months, enabling it to move from satisfactory to good. The 2009 examination results provide a visible marker of the transformation. The proportion of students achieving five A*-C grades including English and mathematics has risen from 47% in 2007 to 63%. All other attainment indicators are extremely positive and the students, who enter with only slightly above average attainment, are now making good progress. Many who enter the sixth form go on to do well individually and in particular subjects but post-16 achievement overall is only satisfactory despite much teaching of good quality. The school has high expectations and clear plans to develop this area further.

Outcomes for all groups, including whether the students feel safe, are good. A positive ethos fosters the students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as their academic achievement. The school is an outward looking community in which the specialism in sport plays a prominent role in demonstrating good practice. Music is equally well regarded by the students and parents for the memorable opportunities it provides for performance. The curriculum is broad and increasingly flexible in offering a variety of routes to success. The expansion of Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses has been influential in enlivening the approaches to teaching through more practical work. The quality of teaching across the school is good and there is a considerable amount which is outstanding. A small proportion of teaching is only satisfactory. The aims of these lessons are not defined sharply and there is a lack of pace and variety in the way learning is structured.

The school cares well for its students and safeguarding procedures and broader welfare arrangements are good. Changes to the pastoral system to group students in mixed-age teams with heads of year replaced by more senior staff have given a further boost to guidance and support. Students get on very well with each other across the age ranges and the school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. However, it has not tackled this area entirely systematically to identify where it might extend opportunities for students to learn about groups represented in British society with backgrounds different to their own.

The school's track record of improvement is exceptional. Self-evaluation is searching and benchmarked against the highest expectations, leading to excellent plans which are already bearing fruit. Governors and senior leaders have acted boldly to tackle barriers to higher performance. The capacity to sustain improvement is outstanding.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in the sixth form by:
 - broadening the curriculum to include more vocational routes
 - ensuring that all students are following appropriate courses.
- Improve the quality of any teaching which is only satisfactory by ensuring that all lessons:
 - are based on precise learning objectives
 - employ a range of approaches to support learning
 - avoid falling into a slow and unvarying pace.
- Develop the school's contribution to community cohesion by analysing more thoroughly the scope and impact of its work and providing further opportunities for students to engage with a range of groups from religious, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds different to their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In a large majority of lessons, the students are fully involved in worthwhile activities which strongly support their learning. They are clear about tasks and how to complete them successfully and are confident to ask teachers for help if required. The students readily evaluate their own and others' efforts to identify what might be done better next time. These good learning experiences have underpinned improvements in attainment, which is now above average. Achievement is good and the students enjoy school. Gifted and talented students are increasingly given more open-ended tasks to tackle although several feel that they could achieve even more. Students with special educational needs make good progress, often because their needs are not severe and they respond well to the school's high expectations of all students. In many lessons they were completing the same tasks as their peers without needing extra help. Those with more significant needs benefit from one to one support although this is not always available in some lessons where it would be helpful. Middle-attaining girls in Key Stage 4 have tended to make less progress than other students. Those interviewed by inspectors were reticent about their future goals but were responding to the school's efforts to motivate them. Work experience had inspired several to give more attention to their future options.

Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good and the school is calm and well ordered. The students report that they feel safe and are confident that any concerns will be dealt with effectively. Above average attendance reflects the students' enjoyment of school and underpins their good preparation for future training and employment.

Alongside good levels of literacy and numeracy, they develop essential broader skills through frequent opportunities to collaborate in lessons, pose questions and solve problems. A wide range of students undertake responsibilities and sixth formers, in particular, make a strong positive contribution to school life, for instance through mentoring younger students. A very large majority of parents believe, with good reason,

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that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle, especially through the emphasis on sport.

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 | 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 | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Most teachers have a very clear understanding of good practice. They plan lessons effectively, carefully identifying different phases of learning. There is much that is outstanding and all subject areas have at least some examples of good or better teaching. Teachers understand the importance of involving students in active learning; for example, using role play to good effect in a Year 10 lesson on sports injuries. They also understand the key importance of using assessment information to plan and monitor work. Virtually every pupil was able to quote their current standing in relation to their targets for different subjects. Teachers frequently referred to precise objectives for different levels of performance to help students know what they needed to be aiming at. Good practice, however, is not uniformly consistent within departments. There is nothing that is inadequate but a minority of teaching is only satisfactory. It proceeds at a pedestrian pace, is based on learning objectives which are too general and provides

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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limited opportunities for different styles of learning.

The school has made significant changes to the curriculum to provide a well-organised and effective framework for learning. It has developed partnerships with various groups in the local community, particularly through the sports specialism, to enrich the students' experience. The introduction of several BTEC courses has been a significant factor in raising attainment and improving the quality of learning and the students' enjoyment and confidence.

Care, guidance and support are very effective and the school's well-established strengths in this area have been developed through the restructuring of tutor groups into teams containing a few students from each year group. Students talk enthusiastically of this innovation which has helped to remove any barriers between year groups. The school has supported potentially vulnerable students extremely well, enabling them sometimes to continue into the sixth form and succeed against the odds.

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body set out to appoint a headteacher who would challenge them and the school to do better. They succeeded. The headteacher's forensic approach to evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses has resulted in a root and branch restructuring of many aspects of the school. In a little over a year, the school has implemented a new pastoral system, a new senior management structure, a more responsive curriculum and a different approach to supporting students with special educational needs. Decisive action has averted a potentially serious issue with the budget. Throughout this period of rapid change, the senior leadership team has focused intently on raising expectations about the achievement of all groups of students. Probing enquiry into the previous year's examination results led to clear points of action for all subject departments with significantly raised targets to eradicate any underachievement and reduce any inequalities. The school has been conspicuously successful in doing so. The senior leadership team has monitored teaching with precision and identified clearly how and where it needs to improve. Professional development has been effective although the school recognises there is more to do. The pace of change and the higher expectation of everyone's performance have been unsettling for some but 97% of the staff who returned Ofsted's questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that they 'knew what we are trying to achieve'.

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Safeguarding procedures are good, with meticulous attention paid to administrative tasks and a good understanding of the broader responsibilities involved in fostering the students' welfare. Case studies of potentially vulnerable students reveal how the school has worked imaginatively with other providers to avoid permanently excluding students. The school satisfactorily promotes the statutory duty for community cohesion and there is much which is good, for example building international links. However, opportunities for students to learn first hand about groups represented in British society are not planned or evaluated entirely systematically.

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Sixth form

The sixth form is well regarded by most students and many students in the lower school see it as a desirable place to study. Numbers have increased and the school has recently refurbished their accommodation. In the main, students follow a broadly traditional curriculum of academic courses but this is being widened. Some individual students have achieved extremely well in examinations and there is a general trend of improvement. All 12 students following mathematics A Level, for instance, gained grade C or above in 2009, with the majority reaching grade A. Students have also been very successful on the applied GCSE courses for business studies. Nevertheless, outcomes across the sixth form overall are only satisfactory when the students' average starting points are taken into account. Although much of the teaching is good and students report that they feel well supported, provision is no better than satisfactory because of the limited range of vocational courses on offer. Some students have begun inappropriate academic courses which the school has only belatedly identified.

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Leadership and management are in a transitional phase as the school awaits the arrival of a new deputy headteacher who will take responsibility for this area. The school has managed the temporary arrangements effectively but recognises that the pace of development has been slower than in the rest of the school.

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 | 3 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are entirely happy with the school. The following comment is typical of many of the responses on the parental questionnaire: 'an excellent school with good work ethic and good discipline'. A very small minority of responses contained critical comments. Several spoke of instances of bad behaviour and low-level bullying while others reported dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching. Several responses expressed frustration with a recent progress review day because parents were unable to speak to individual subject teachers.

The inspection team concluded that bullying is not a significant issue. The school is highly aware of the damaging effect of this type of behaviour and deals successfully with incidents when they occur. Behaviour at the school is good. There is some variation in the quality of teaching and some classes have experienced disruption caused by the illness of teachers. Most teaching, however, is good. The school has introduced many changes which have been carefully considered. The progress review day is one part of a major restructuring of the way the school monitors and cares for its students. The inspection team was impressed by the aims and the impact of the changes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Chasetown Specialist 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 226 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 885 students registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 60 | 27 | 151 | 67 | 15 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 70 | 31 | 146 | 65 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 90 | 40 | 124 | 55 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 72 | 32 | 133 | 59 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 49 | 22 | 153 | 68 | 13 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 48 | 21 | 136 | 60 | 29 | 13 | 4 | 2 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 50 | 22 | 153 | 68 | 17 | 8 | 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) | 47 | 21 | 140 | 62 | 18 | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 48 | 21 | 150 | 66 | 16 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 60 | 27 | 129 | 57 | 19 | 8 | 5 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 27 | 12 | 152 | 67 | 23 | 10 | 3 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 44 | 19 | 142 | 63 | 17 | 8 | 5 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 76 | 34 | 132 | 58 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 2 |

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.



13 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Chasetown Specialist Sports College, Burntwood, WS7 3QW

I am writing to give you a brief summary of the findings of our recent inspection.

Many of you told us how proud you were of the school and this was confirmed by the answers to the questionnaire that 150 of you completed. Most students feel safe and think that they are taught and cared for well. The parental and staff questionnaires were similarly very positive. Your school is good and is outstandingly placed to continue improving. It is going through a rapid transformation which is already improving many aspects of your education. Many of you told us how much you liked the new tutor groups. We also saw that there had been important changes to the curriculum to help you gain more qualifications and to experience more practical approaches to learning. The quality of teaching has improved and students are now making good progress. The 2009 examination results are the best the school has ever obtained and we do not think that this is a one-off event. The headteacher and her senior staff have been very busy analysing the school's work and planning well-thought-out improvements which will build on the recent successes.

The headteacher is well aware that there is still much to do if you are to become an outstanding school. We have left the school with three areas to focus on.

Improve achievement in the sixth form by offering a greater number of vocational subjects and making sure that everyone is studying the right course.

Improve the quality of any teaching which is not as good as the best on offer in every subject.

Plan how to provide even more opportunities for you to learn first-hand about groups from different backgrounds to yourselves.

I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Huddleday

Her Majesty's Inspector
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