

# Sandon High School Business and Enterprise College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124389
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	344388
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Cook HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	799
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr David Brookfield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Karen Castrey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Sandon Road Meir Stoke-on-Trent ST3 7DF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent observing learning in 28 lessons all taught by different teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders, governors, local authority representatives and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, monitoring and evaluation documents and assessment data.

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

- the work the school is doing to raise students' attainment in English and mathematics
- the impact of the work of senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching
- the achievement of students eligible for a free school meal.

## Information about the school

Sandon Business & Enterprise School was placed into special measures in October 2008 and was then monitored by one of Her Majesty's Inspector. This inspection began as the fourth monitoring inspection, but when inspectors found that the school was providing a satisfactory standard of education inspectors looked at all areas of the school's work.

The school receives adviser support via the government initiative to raise attainment called National Challenge. The headteacher took up post in September 2009 having worked with the senior leadership team since May 2009. A local secondary school will be assimilated by Sandon Business & Enterprise School from September 2010. Plans to manage the assimilation have been drawn up and action has already been taken to ensure a smooth transition. The local school that will be assimilated has an arts specialism, which the school will adopt.

The number on roll makes this school smaller than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is much higher than the national average. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Most students are White British.

**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

The successful work of senior leaders and staff has brought about improvements ensuring that the quality of education provided for students is satisfactory. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Since the previous inspection in October 2008, the school has focused on raising attainment, accelerating the progress students make and improving the quality of teaching. In all three areas improvements have been noticeable:

∫ the proportion of students achieving 5 or more A\*-C at GCSE has risen from 41% in 2007 to 56% in 2009

∫ the amount of progress students make has been improving year-on-year with the highlight in 2009 when students eligible for a free school meal made good progress

∫ the quality of teaching is satisfactory with an increasing proportion being good or better.

There still remain areas where improvement is needed and capacity to improve is satisfactory. The proportion of students achieving 5 or more A\*-C at GCSE including English and mathematics has improved, but is still too low and in all subjects relatively few students attain the higher A\*-A grades. Senior leaders are aware of these challenges because rigorous systems for evaluating the work of the school are now in place. Evaluation work has led to improvement plans that are focused on what will improve students' outcomes, but they sometimes lack the sharpness of having measurable targets. Where senior leaders have been most effective is in demonstrating good leadership and management in their drive and determination to improve the quality of teaching. There are good plans in place to improve the curriculum, which is currently satisfactory. The school's business and enterprise specialism is developing steadily but it is not yet a distinguishing curricular feature. Improvements have been made to the way in which the curriculum meets the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities but individual plans for these students are not driving what happens in lessons.

The quality of care and guidance provided by the school is good and is a significant contributory factor leading to the many good students' outcomes, including good behaviour and good attendance. The procedures to keep students safe are good. The work done to promote a sense of mutual respect and tolerance towards people from different faith, cultural and economic backgrounds is effectively encouraging students to value diversity.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' attainment especially in English and mathematics, by:
  - extending the tracking of, and subsequent interventions for, underperforming students across all years through the effective use of data by all staff so that attainment is at least average and instances of significantly below average attainment for groups of students are rare
  - using assessment data to inform decisions about when to enter students onto examination courses
  - merging the current data systems of Sandon Business & Enterprise College and the school that will be assimilated, so that all staff have access to accurate and up-to-date data about all students' progress, which can be used to inform teaching.
- Ensure curricular provision is good so that it meets the entitlement, needs and aspirations of all students, by:
  - embedding the school's specialism by promoting a significant business and enterprise dimension within classroom practice, so that the specialism drives whole-school improvement and directly impacts upon students' outcomes
  - promoting 14-19 learning opportunities within Sandon, the local area and across the city by putting in place the plans for an innovative 2010 Curriculum and Careers, Information and Guidance programme.
- Improve the quality of provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
  - refining the leadership and management structure for provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities so as to create and sustain a strong sense of purpose and meet ambitious targets for all students
  - constructing and rigorously monitoring individual educational plans that accurately address individual student's needs thus removing barriers to learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that the vast majority is good or better, by:
  - the extension of the peer coaching programme to include middle leaders so that consistently high standards in teaching and learning are employed across all subjects.
- 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**

The amount of progress students make is improving. In lessons, students are keen to work, particularly when they are given opportunities to work independently or on

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practical activities. Many students will persevere with tasks given to them and there are times when they are really enthused about the work they are given. In one lesson, for example, an inspector observed outstanding learning where some students asked others searching questions about descriptive writing. Work in some books suggests that students do not always push themselves to do their best, for example, presentation is sometimes sloppy. Progress measures show an improving trend. For the first time in a number of years, progress measures in 2009 showed that overall students made satisfactory progress given their starting points with students eligible for a free school meal making good progress.

Students' attainment is improving and increasing numbers of students are working at average or above average levels. GCSE results in 2009 showed a significant rise in attainment in mathematics and the proportion of students achieving two or more A\*-C grades in science is now significantly above the national average.

The students have a strong sense of feeling safe in school. They talk enthusiastically and knowledgably about adopting healthy lifestyles, including taking up extra sporting activities and choosing wisely in the school canteen. The 'Junior Leadership Team' (JLT) is a good example of the opportunities students are given to contribute to the life of the school. JLT members, for example, are involved in working with senior staff to produce guidance on teaching and learning.

The school's business and enterprise specialism is providing a range of activities for students to develop skills and attitudes that will prepare them for further education, training or employment. Most Year 11 students achieved a qualification related to business and enterprise in 2009. Low literacy and numeracy skills achieved by the majority of students restrict their future choices.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of teaching has improved and good teaching is becoming more common. Good features of teaching are as follows:

- thorough planning that identifies how teaching will adapt to the students' different abilities
- a range of activities, including some recently introduced strategies to promote learning, that are well thought through and encourage students to think and work independently
- good management of time in the lesson, so that students are constantly challenged
- effective questioning that requires students to explain their understanding or thinking in more detail
- good use of resources from interactive white boards to displays that act as learning prompts.

When teaching is satisfactory it is very evident that:

- teaching fails to challenge all students sufficiently because all students start off doing the same task when some could move straight onto more demanding work
- teachers' marking of books is sporadic and does not help students to understand the progress they are making, what they need to do to improve and often ignores poor presentation.

There are good plans in place that encapsulate a vision to make the curriculum more innovative and influenced by the school's current business and enterprise specialism and the arts specialism to be taken on from September 2010. Since September 2009 a broader range of courses has been on offer for students through the Stoke-on-Trent local authority consortium. For example, students could choose from three diploma courses, but the uptake for these was low because part of the course would take place at another school or college. Senior leaders are working hard to encourage students to broaden their horizons and so raise their aspirations through curriculum choices.

In most lessons, teaching takes into account the need to support students with different abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, specific plans that outline how individuals will be supported and the targets they are working towards are not well written and are often too general and not specific to students' needs.

Students told inspectors how much they appreciated the pastoral groups they belong to which include students from Year 8 through to Year 11. Good care and guidance,

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informed by more accurate assessment data, has led to individual support for those students eligible for a free school meal. Staff awareness and action to support these students has led to their good achievement which bucks the national trend. Another example of good care and guidance provided by the school is the individual mentoring Year 11 students receive. Staff meet students at least once a week to talk through work, to encourage and to offer support with homework. Assessment data shows that this one-to-one support is improving students' chances of achieving their targets.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team have successfully led improvement work securing the support and commitment of staff. Over the last year the skills of the senior leadership team have developed well. Improvements in attainment and in the quality of teaching have led to a confidence that is driving improvement. Work to raise the quality of teaching has included:

Staff know that the promotion of good teaching and learning is key to making the school a good one and there are good plans to do this through a 'learning champion' role. Targets for Year 11 results are challenging but are based on a range of accurate assessment data. This was not the case when, in 2008, results did not meet predictions. The wealth of data also ensures that the school is aware of and responsive in promoting equal opportunities; consequently, the gap between the attainment of boys and girls has narrowed. Monitoring and evaluating activities are developing and reports on different subjects show that heads of subject departments are now reviewing students' achievement and the quality of teaching more robustly. The quality of teaching and learning in each subject is reviewed annually by heads of department alongside a member of the senior leadership team and includes the monitoring of students' books and work. The relative infrequency of these checks has meant that senior staff have not always been aware of poor quality marking. The leadership and management of provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved, but is not yet ensuring that support and challenge is meeting students' specific needs.

The impact of the business and enterprise specialism is growing. Compared to the previous academic year more students are taking business and enterprise-related courses. Recently, there has been a greater focus on how the specialism affects teaching and the curriculum, but this work is still underdeveloped.

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Governors are well organised and aware of the school's strengths and areas of weakness through the detailed information presented to them from senior leaders. Individual governors each have a link with a curriculum area and some have started to visit the school to gain a view of the quality of education provided.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## **Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire**

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## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



4 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Sandon High School

Thank you for the help you gave us when we inspected your school and to those who met with inspectors to talk about how the school has improved. This was my fourth visit to the school since it was placed in special measures and on this occasion we agreed that your school is now providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. More of you are making satisfactory progress and some of you are now making good progress.

The quality of teaching has improved and this is because the senior leaders of your school have effectively encouraged teachers to use better strategies. We agree with those of you we spoke to that the school is a safe place to be in. We thought your behaviour was good and we were impressed with your attitudes to living in a culturally diverse city. Your attendance is good and the school provides lots of opportunities, for example, the junior leadership team, for you to contribute to the school and other communities.

The senior leaders now want everyone in your school to work hard to improve the school further so it is at least good. The inspectors worked with your headteacher and senior leaders and identified the following key areas to work on:

- raising your attainment especially in English and mathematics
- re-designing the curriculum so that it is challenging, interesting and helps you achieve your aspirations
- improving the individual support for those of you who find learning difficult or have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- making sure that the vast majority of teaching is good or better.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andrew Cook

Her Majesty's Inspector

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