

# Stretford Grammar School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106368
<b>Local Authority</b>	Trafford
<b>Inspection number</b>	344719
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marguerite McCloy 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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	755
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	144
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr H Allmond
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M Mullins/Mr D Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Granby Road Stretford Manchester M32 8JB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 8652293
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The proportion of time spent by inspectors on direct observations of students' learning amounted to around 60% of available inspection time. Inspectors observed 28 lessons. In all, more than 30 teachers and several support staff were observed and/or involved in discussions about the school's work. Inspectors held meetings with members of the leadership team and other staff, groups of students, and the Chair of Governors. They observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including relevant policies, the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, and its internal assessment data on students' attainment and progress. Inspectors also looked at the completed returns of a questionnaire to parents and carers that was distributed by the school in February 2010.

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

- the capacity of the school's leadership team to sustain the good improvements seen on the second monitoring inspection in November 2009
- the quality of teaching across all year groups, including the sixth form, with particular focus on students' learning and progress and on teachers' use of assessment to support learning
- the school's analysis and use of information on the performance of all groups of students to meet challenging targets, particularly at GCSE grades A\* to A
- the quality and impact of the school's curriculum in meeting the needs of all students, especially at Key Stage 4.

## Information about the school

Stretford Grammar is a selective school with foundation status. It is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. A below average number of students are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, around 70%, is much higher than average. The largest group of these is of Pakistani heritage and represents over one quarter of the school's population. Although almost 40% of students speak English as an additional language, very few are in the early stages of learning English. In the main school there are more boys than girls, at an approximate ratio of 60:40. More than one third of the sixth form students have joined Stretford Grammar from other local schools. The school has specialist status in science with mathematics.

In February 2009 the school was placed in special measures because it was failing to give students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. Following that inspection the headteacher and deputy headteacher of a neighbouring grammar school were seconded to Stretford on a one-year contract as acting and associate headteachers. The governing body completed its recruitment and selection process for the substantive headteacher in December 2009.

The current associate headteacher takes up this position in April 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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

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.

Stretford Grammar provides a satisfactory and improving education for its students and value for money is now satisfactory. The school's strong capacity to improve further is demonstrated in the rapid improvement already made since the last inspection, as a consequence of effective leadership and management, higher expectations and greater accountability. Self-evaluation is accurate and based on a thorough analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the performance of all groups of students. Attainment remains high, as students consistently reach standards that overall are significantly above average by the end of Key Stage 4. The school is aware that more of its students are capable of reaching the highest grades A\* to A at GCSE examinations in a number of subjects. A key focus on improving this picture through rigorous monitoring and development of teaching and learning is beginning to have an impact. Recent assessments and mock examinations indicate that the school is on track to reach many of its challenging targets for Key Stage 4 students in 2010. Much of the teaching is now good or better, although leaders know that this is not as consistent across the school as it needs to be in order to eradicate fully previous underachievement. Nevertheless, students enjoy most of their lessons because they respond well to the often interesting and stimulating teaching with higher levels of challenge and opportunities for group work and discussion. The school's curriculum, although much improved since being judged inadequate at the last inspection, rightly remains a focus for development. There is currently limited provision for more imaginative learning and enrichment opportunities for all students. Also, options for early GCSE entry are fewer than in many similar schools.

Students value the good care and guidance provided by the school. Many of the students who spoke to inspectors agree that staff go out of their way to give time, advice and support whenever they are needed. Teamwork is strong and morale is high, as most teaching and support staff share the leadership team's vision and determination to drive the school forward towards excellence.

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

- Increase the proportion of GCSE passes at the highest grades A\* to A so as to reflect fully the capabilities of higher-attaining students.
- Build on recent improvements in teaching and learning so that these are good or better in most lessons by:

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- sharing the good practice that already exists in the school
- ensuring that all teachers use the school's good-quality information about students' prior learning to provide activities which fully challenge each individual student
- raising teachers' expectations of students' involvement in and responsibility for their own learning, both through independent work and group discussions
- improving the consistency of teachers' quality of marking across the school, so that all students are clear about what they need to do to improve their work.
- Develop the curriculum further by:
  - ensuring that the quality of the curriculum has a more positive impact on students' outcomes, for example their behaviour and contribution to the school and wider community
  - widening the range of opportunities for all students to engage in enrichment opportunities and take on responsibilities
  - giving consideration to the expansion of early-entry GCSE opportunities for students in some subjects.
- Around 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**

Having entered the school with generally well above average attainment, students make satisfactory progress and attainment is high by the end of Year 11. The majority of students are articulate and confident and keen to do well, so their attitudes to learning are positive. Most teachers use a range of strategies to ensure that students enjoy their lessons and make at least satisfactory and often good progress. There are some occasions when students 'switch off' and do not take enough responsibility for their learning or rise to the challenges set. This is more often a feature of lessons that are not particularly inspiring or where activities are not well matched to students' abilities. The relatively small proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to well-organised and effective support in lessons and in the school's inclusion centre. Higher-attaining students do not always achieve the highest levels of which they are capable, due to shortcomings in some aspects of teaching across the school.

Successful strategies to improve pace and expectation in lessons are working well to remedy this, although they have not yet had time to have full impact on GCSE results at A\* to A grades. Although it had been an issue at the time of the previous inspection, there is now little difference between the progress made by girls and that of boys. Similarly, there is no discernible difference between the achievement of students from White British or minority ethnic backgrounds.

Students who shared their views with inspectors reported that they feel safe in school.

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They do not think that bullying takes place, and feel that staff would be quick to help sort out disagreements before they became a problem. In fact, students are more likely to comment positively on the harmonious and friendly relationships that exist across the school. Students' spiritual and cultural development is enhanced by the multicultural make-up of the school's intake and their tolerance and understanding of each other's differences. Their awareness of and reflection on the world around them is enhanced through themed activities, including those associated with Black History Month, Iftar, Holocaust Memorial and British Citizenship.

*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>	1
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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</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 in the majority of lessons is now good. Initiatives to raise the overall quality of teaching are working effectively. For example, the introduction of class profile sheets to identify students' individual strengths and weaknesses encourages teachers to plan accordingly. Focused professional development and the introduction of sharing good practice are also beginning to have the desired effect. The school recognises that more remains to be done to ensure that teaching is

<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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consistently good or better, as too much is still satisfactory. The better teaching is characterised by high expectations, lively pace and creative use of resources such as information and communication technology (ICT) to spark students' learning. Consequently, students show high levels of interest, make rapid progress and achieve well. Where teaching is less effective, the level of challenge is too low and talk by the teacher dominates the lesson. Tasks are not matched closely enough to students' needs and abilities. When the pace of teaching is too slow some students become frustrated and this can result in low-level chatter. Teachers are starting to use assessment data effectively to track students' progress towards more demanding targets and most students are aware of particular level and grade requirements in some subjects. The quality of day-to-day marking is variable in helping students understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The curriculum is satisfactorily matched to students' needs and interests. The school's specialism is starting to have a positive impact on spreading good practice, for example through collaboration between teachers on the development of cross-curricular projects: these include the 'Da Vinci day' and links with local engineers.

Staff know their students well and this contributes to the good guidance and support provided for them. Heads of year successfully combine academic guidance with pastoral monitoring. Well-targeted support enables potentially vulnerable students to feel secure and work effectively to make good progress. The school provides students with good advice and guidance to make informed choices about courses and careers.

*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 associate and acting headteachers, with the support of the local authority, provided much-needed support to the school's very capable deputy headteacher following the inspection in February 2009. These three leaders have worked rapidly and successfully with other senior staff to develop the skills of middle leaders and thereby secure good capacity to improve further. There is a clear and shared vision for the school's future and any underperformance is now rigorously challenged. Key roles and responsibilities are carried out effectively and teachers are held to account for improving students' learning and progress. It is to their credit that staff have responded positively to the challenges of the last 12 months and willingly take on board any opportunities to improve their skills further.

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Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and appropriate records are diligently maintained. Careful attention is paid to health and safety, including risk assessments and checks on equipment and fire drills. Good communication between the inclusion leader, staff and governors helps to ensure that child protection requirements are met and staff training is up to date. The governing body is well informed and able to hold the school to account. Governors are becoming more involved in the school's self-evaluation procedures and are looking to develop their role further, for example by completing a review of the impact of the school's equalities policy. The school is inclusive and discrimination is not tolerated, although it recognises that there is more to do to ensure fuller equality of opportunity for more-able students. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily and the school has a clear understanding of its context in terms of ethnicity, religion and socio-economic factors.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

The school's much improved facilities for the sixth form, especially in ICT and in the refurbished common room and separate work room, are much appreciated by students. They have also helped to improve the effectiveness of students' independent learning. Attainment by the end of Year 13 has risen steadily and significantly over the last three years and is now high. Some differences in attainment between subjects are still apparent but the gap is closing. Most groups of students make good progress and achieve well. A very large majority of students go on to well-regarded universities. Students say they enjoy the sixth form and attendance levels are high. Students enjoy taking on responsibilities by, for example, supporting the learning of younger students in

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a range of subjects. They are active in the local community where they give up time freely to support a local hospice and engage actively in peer mentoring and in the National Prevent Agenda. The smooth transition of large numbers of students from other schools testifies to the good levels of care and support the school provides. The sixth form offers an appropriate range of academic courses that meet the needs and aspirations of most students. Students are very pleased with the guidance they receive in, for example, their research of appropriate courses and applications to higher education. The range of enrichment activities is limited. Students say they would welcome more opportunities for cultural visits and for sports. Leadership of the sixth form provides an improving focus on development and planning for the future. Academic monitoring of students' progress towards demanding targets is improving. Students know their targets and, increasingly, what they need to do to achieve them.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

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

**Views of parents and carers**

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

However, the school has recently canvassed the views of parents and carers in its own survey based on the same questions used by Ofsted. Although only a small number of responses were returned from Key Stage 4 and the sixth form (less than 30), the response across Key Stage 3 was higher at around 130. Of those who responded to this survey, the vast majority of parents and carers have positive views of the school. This is particularly evident in the opinion that their children enjoy school and feel safe. They appreciate the introduction of half-termly reviews that inform parents and carers about their children's progress.

Inspection evidence confirms these mainly positive views, and found that the school and its governors are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers, and students, to improve its provision further. Comments and suggestions are being acted upon and parents and carers are consulted on any key changes to the organisation of the school. In fact, the school is justifiably proud of the strategies it is developing to increase its engagement with parents and carers.

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

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

## 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.**



04 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Stretford Grammar School, Manchester M32 8JB

I am pleased to tell you that my third monitoring visit to your school recently resulted in it being removed from the special measures category. The inspection team found that the school is now satisfactory and improving. The sixth form, previously judged satisfactory, has also improved and is now good. This represents excellent progress in a relatively short time, and is something to be proud of.

The key strengths leading to this decision are as follows.

- Senior leaders are successfully driving improvement, raising expectations and rigorously monitoring the school's performance. They are well supported by department and subject leaders too, so the school has a good capacity to improve further.
- You continue to reach high standards overall, and the school is working effectively to ensure that those of you who are capable of achieving more A\* to A grades at GCSE are able to realise your potential fully.
- More of the teaching is now good or better and is continuing to improve as teachers are keen to develop their skills further.
- Care, guidance and support are good, both in the main school and sixth form, and this makes a good contribution to your personal development and the fact that you feel safe and well cared for in school.

We have suggested that the school should continue to work on the following issues to move it forward to become good or outstanding in the future.

- Increase the proportion of students achieving at the highest grades.
- Improve teaching and learning further so that it is more consistently good or better across the school.
- Develop the school's curriculum so that it provides more imaginative and effective opportunities and experiences to contribute to your academic and personal development.

You can play your part by making sure that you always put your best efforts into your work and take responsibility for your own learning whenever it is appropriate, for example through group discussion and contributing your ideas in lessons. I am sure that

you will also be consulted about your own views on how aspects of the school's curriculum may be developed further to ensure that you are fully motivated and challenged to do your best, both academically and personally.

So, congratulations to everyone and best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marguerite McCloy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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