

# Grangefield School & Technology College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111753
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	310679
<b>Inspection date</b>	2 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Richardson, HMI

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

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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 on roll</b>	
School	1290
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Basford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Allan Mansfield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Oxbridge Avenue Stockton-on-Tees TS18 4LE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 353637
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 673579

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, curriculum, care, guidance and support, leadership and management, gathering evidence from scrutiny of documents, analysis of parental questionnaires, checking assessment data, interviews with staff and pupils, and observation of lessons. Some aspects of the schools work, such as governance, were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Grangefield School and Technology College is a larger than average school and serves a large area of Stockton. This area encompasses a wide range of economic and social conditions. Just over half the pupils come from homes in areas designated for neighbourhood renewal and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Around 10% of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and around 7% of pupils have a first language that is not English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around two-thirds of the national average. The school was awarded Specialist Technology College status in September 1999, and was re-designated in 2003. It holds a number of other awards including Artsmark Silver, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools Award (Gold), two School Achievement Awards, Certificate of Accreditation for Careers Guidance, and Schools Curriculum Award.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils. The headteacher and senior leadership team demonstrate a systematic and vigorous approach to school improvement. They monitor the impact of their management, and have created a learning environment where teachers and pupils feel well informed and listened to. They have led the school through a period of improvement during which the success of pupils at GCSE has risen to be significantly above similar schools. The school has not yet had such a positive impact on standards of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, but senior leaders have clearly identified this area as a target for improvement.

Achievement of pupils is good overall. Pupils enter school with attainment that is average and, by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have made good progress. For the last two years the school has been in the top 20% of schools in similar contexts. The last three years show an improving trend. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress, and the school has clear strategies to raise the achievement of these pupils. Standards in Key Stage 3 have been at a plateau for the three years 2005–2007. Pupils reach at least the standard expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 3 is not as good as that made by pupils during Key Stage 4. The school has identified this and has set about bringing improvements by implementing in Key Stage 3 the close tracking and monitoring system that has underpinned improvements to Key Stage 4. The inspection team agrees that raising standards in Key Stage 3 is a main priority for improvement in the school. At the moment there is not a consistent approach to tracking and monitoring across all subjects and key stages. Interviews with pupils showed their performance receives more attention in some subjects than others.

Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good. Their attendance is average but has improved over the last few years. The school works hard to promote these features. Pupils understand the school's high expectations of them and, in the main, they live up to these. In most lessons they work hard and those pupils who spoke with inspectors clearly enjoy school. The large majority feel safe, although a few expressed concerns about bullying. However, all are confident that any issues that concern them are taken seriously by staff and tackled swiftly. The responses from parents who completed the questionnaire show their similar positive view of pupils' behaviour, and their children being safe and enjoying school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good and is supported effectively by well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programmes. Pupils increasingly adopt healthy lifestyles, and they understand the choices they make from a range of healthy options in the canteen; the school has been awarded Healthy School status. Pupils feel that their opinions are heard and valued. They appreciate the way the school seeks their views, for example, in changing the school uniform, and in the changes to the school day. Their social skills are promoted effectively and, as a result, pupils are increasingly well prepared for responsibilities in school and their post-school choices. They make significant contributions to the life of the school in a range of ways.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Inspectors' lesson observations gave strong evidence that the school's own evaluation of teaching and learning was aligned well with the Ofsted criteria. The weakest teaching seen was characterised by poor planning that did not address the range of needs present in the class; poor intervention to prevent non-application and off-task activities. In the large majority of lessons pupils had good relationships with each other

and with teachers. There are generally high levels of application and little off-task behaviour. Interviews with pupils showed the majority have positive views of the teaching they receive. They expressed views that correlated closely with the outcomes of pupil surveys carried out by the school. While they raised issues in particular subjects, they described how the teaching was good, but that dull teaching caused them to be bored and led to some poor behaviour. The senior team has successfully led the improvement of teaching and learning in Key Stage 4, but the initiative has yet to impact fully on Key Stage 3.

The curriculum provided by the school is good. Following recent extensive review it now meets the needs of most pupils well. There is a growing range of opportunities in Key Stage 4, particularly in vocational subjects, and for those pupils not well suited to GCSE courses. This reflects the school's ambition to ensure greater flexibility and choice to meet the needs and aspirations of all its pupils in Key Stage 4. The school is appropriately looking at ways to diversify the Key Stage 3 curriculum, for example by providing for some pupils to choose Urdu as a foreign language from Year 7. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, which are popular with pupils. Experiences in careers, enterprise, and work experience are well planned, and ensure that pupils are well informed about their options when they leave school.

Pupils are very positive about the care, guidance and support they receive. Staff demonstrate a high level of concern for, and commitment to, pupils' welfare; this contributes significantly to pupils' good progress, their enjoyment and their well-being. The pastoral system offers good guidance to pupils, who generally feel safe in this well-ordered community. Pupils told inspectors that they have adults who they trust and can turn to with any problems, and that these are usually dealt with speedily. Progress reviews are held regularly with subject teachers, and tutors check pupils' personal targets frequently. Pupils value the help they receive in making informed choices, for example, in choosing their subject options. Very good use is made of the school's on-line data systems in tracking both pupils' academic and personal development. By canvassing pupils' views systematically, the school identifies their needs and is able to adapt rapidly to meet those needs more fully. Parental views are also widely sought, and acted upon. Of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire, almost all were strongly positive and supportive of the school. It is evident that family support for pupils in their learning and engagement with school life is a contributory factor in the school's progress, and one that the school is harnessing effectively.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The senior leadership team have good clarity of purpose and well defined roles that are understood by other members of staff. They are well coordinated and well connected into the management structure of the school. The decisions and innovation the senior team has made have led to considerable improvements in Key Stage 4, and they now have Key Stage 3 clearly in their sights. The self-evaluation form was completed well to give a clear picture of the school. The school development plan has identified areas for improvement that follow a clear rationale from the available evidence. One concern of the leadership team is to prepare middle managers and subject leaders to take on a greater responsibility for monitoring and evaluation. There is a strong and right concern to measure improvement and monitor the impact that the leadership team is having. They have shown they have the capacity to bring about further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in Key Stage 3, particularly in mathematics and English.

- To further develop the skills of middle management in the school, including subject leaders, to fully implement monitoring and other measures to raise standards, and ensure effective succession planning.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grangefield School & Technology College, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 4LE.

On behalf of the inspection team, I want to thank you for your contributions to the recent inspection of your school. We were pleased with the way you were willing to talk with us about your views of the school, and this helped us to reach our conclusions. Your behaviour around school and in lessons was good and we were delighted to see the good relationships you have and the respect you show to each other and to staff.

You made it clear to us that you feel safe in the school and that staff provide you with good care, guidance and support. It was good to see that the parents who filled in questionnaires agreed with your views. You told us that, on the whole, the teaching you receive is good, although the standards vary a little. You should continue to make your views about the school known, the school staff are keen to hear what you have to say, and you have an effective school council to express your views.

The standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 11 are good and well above similar schools. You should keep up your efforts to do well. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are not making as good progress. The school's management has identified the need to improve standards in these year groups.

You are receiving a good standard of education. In order to improve, the school needs to ensure good teaching and the monitoring of pupils consistently across all subjects by all staff. The school's leadership team are identifying ways of training the staff to carry out the tracking of your performance to help you to improve. I am sure that the staff will be expecting you to play your part and give of your best in all your lessons.

Thank you again, and I wish you well in your efforts to do your best at school.

Ian Richardson, HMI