



# Sale Grammar School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 106371  
 Local Authority Trafford  
 Inspection number 287501  
 Inspection dates 22 November 2006  
 Reporting inspector Heather Barnett HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	Marsland Road
School category	Community		Sale
Age range of pupils	11-18		Cheshire
			M33 3NH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 973 3217
Number on roll (school)	907	Fax number	0161 976 4904
Number on roll (6th form)	302		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs C Singleton
Date of previous school inspection	December 2001	Headteacher	Mr D Wilson

Age group 11-18	Inspection date(s) 22 November 2006	Inspection no. 287501
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors in a one day visit. Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior managers, governors, staff and students. They visited a range of lessons and observed students' conduct at break and lunchtime. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation and over 400 questionnaires completed by parents.

## Description of the school

Sale Grammar School is a larger than average selective, co-educational school with visual arts specialist status. It is a stable school with a lower than average percentage of students entitled to free school meals. There are fewer students than average from minority ethnic backgrounds or with English as an additional language. There are no students with statements of special educational needs and fewer than average students who need extra help with their learning.

## Key for inspection grades

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

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## Overall effectiveness of the school

**Grade: 1**

This is an outstanding school. The visual arts specialist status permeates all aspects of the school and has been used as a vehicle for continually moving the school forward. Students are happy in the school, make good progress and reach very high standards at the end of each Key Stage. However, there is still scope for the most able boys to do even better, building on the improvement in progress already seen this year. Teaching is effective and students respond keenly to the high levels of challenge. The setting of targets and assessment processes are good and are being further developed. The personal development of students is outstanding.

The curriculum is excellent and strongly reflects the school's specialist status. It supports students in achieving their aspirations and prepares them well for the next stage of their career. The extra-curricular activities are a strength of the school and all students speak very highly of them. There is a very wide range and a large number of activities are linked to the visual arts. There is excellent care, guidance and support for students, particularly when students join the school in Year 7 and when they progress from Year 11 into the sixth form. Attendance levels are very high and students feel safe and well cared for.

Leadership and management are excellent. This is a school that knows itself well. There is a strong focus on priority areas and the positive impact of management actions can clearly be seen, for example, in the improved results in 2006. Self-evaluation is well established and enables the school to make accurate judgements about its provision. A very small minority of departments are not performing at the expected high level. Managers are aware of this and are working hard to help them improve. Weaknesses from the last inspection have been tackled effectively and the school is strongly placed to improve further. It provides excellent value for money.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form **Grade: 1**

This is an outstanding sixth form. Students make excellent progress and achieve outstanding results. They receive very high quality teaching and appreciate the opportunities they have for independent learning. There is an excellent tracking system, which enables staff and students to monitor progress very effectively. The curriculum offers them an excellent choice of subjects, which meets their needs and aspirations, along with the broad range of extra-curricular activities available which help them to develop wider skills. Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students feel exceptionally well supported when they enter the sixth form, during their studies and in their preparation for transition from school to higher education, employment or training.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve performance in a small minority of departments.
- Further raise the achievement of the most able boys.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 2**

### Grade for the sixth form: 1

Students make good progress and reach exceptionally high standards between Year 7 and Year 11. Students enter the school with high attainment levels. In 2006 students' progress was good, with results at the highest level the school has recorded. Students achieve standards well above average in English, science and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 3. In 2005 the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, was 98%. The achievement of grades A\* and A was well above the national average. This was also the case in 2006. The staff set challenging targets, linked to high expectations. Rigorous data analysis takes place to identify areas of underperformance. The good progress made by girls is not always matched by that made by boys, however the progress made by boys improved markedly in 2006. There are slightly less successful results in a small number of subjects, for example some languages.

Progress and standards in the sixth form are outstanding.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 1**

The personal development of students is outstanding. Students enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. Attendance rates are very high. Behaviour is good both in classrooms and around the school. Students respect one another and staff. They take part in a valuable range of extra-curricular activities such as in arts, sports, music, drama and trips abroad. Students are very aware of the importance of health and fitness and take advantage of the new healthy options menus and breakfast clubs that have been successfully introduced. Drug and sex education are very effective and the school has very good counselling services. Students make very good use of opportunities created by the schools specialist status to support local community groups and charities and this is an exceptional strong aspect of the school. Sixth form students show particular commitment to supporting the community through participation in a range of local and international programmes. Fair trade and young enterprise groups are very active. Students' moral, social and cultural development is good and the school places a strong focus on this area. However, there is a need to make some parts of the citizenship programme more interesting and relevant.

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## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

#### Grade for the sixth form: 1

Teaching and learning are good overall and outstanding in the sixth form. All lessons are well structured, supported by clear schemes of work and detailed lesson plans. Teachers demonstrate very good levels of subject knowledge and have high expectations of students. Students respond well to the high level of challenge and there are many examples of students asking excellent questions, which reflect their detailed understanding of subjects. There is an increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and some very good examples of its applications, particularly in sixth form sessions. In a small minority of lessons not all students are fully engaged in activities and consequently make more limited progress.

Effective assessment strategies are in place, which enable staff to identify underperformance so that appropriate support can be put in place. This is already having a positive impact on student progress and is being further developed to consolidate the effect. Assessment in the sixth form is excellent and a major strength of the provision.

Staff are constantly working to improve the quality of teaching and learning further. Very good use has been made of specialist status. For example in improving resources, bringing in additional specialists in certain areas such as textiles and in developing more visual teaching strategies.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding in both the main school and the sixth form. It is broad and balanced, complies with statutory requirements and makes very good provision for developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The options available at Key stage 4 and in the sixth form, are responsive to students' needs and have been broadened to reflect the school's specialist status. Changes to the timetable and offering students the opportunity to study subjects outside normal lesson time, for example in twilight sessions, have further increased the provision available.

The very wide range of extra-curricular activities is a strength of the school. These are offered before school, at lunchtime and after school and there are very high levels of student participation. For example, on Mondays after school there are more than 17 activities on offer ranging from a GCSE ceramics masterclass to a Year 7 robot club. Many of the activities reflect the visual arts

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status of the school and have been instrumental in greatly expanding links with the community.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support for students are of the highest standard. The school is a happy friendly place. Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively. The numbers of exclusions from school are very low. Effective support is given to the small number of students with special educational needs. There are thorough safeguarding procedures and staff are fully aware of their roles. Exceptionally good induction in Year 7 enables students to settle into school quickly. Pastoral care has been improved to ensure support is more strongly linked to academic performance. Students know their own targets and know what they have to do to achieve success. Overall, the school has very good relationships with parents. Considerable care is taken to ensure that the transition between Year 11 and the sixth form is seamless. Students receive very useful advice and guidance on employment, higher education and monitoring finances. Monitoring of the progress of sixth form students is particularly strong and retention rates are high. A very high proportion of sixth formers progress to higher education.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The senior leadership team has a clear vision for the school, which is effectively communicated to the whole school community. There is a very strong focus on teaching and learning and clear identification of priority areas. Effective plans are put in place to address issues and the positive impact of these can be seen in the improvement in results in 2006, particularly for English at Key Stage 3 and the achievement of the most able boys at Key Stage 4.

There is a clear understanding of accountability at all levels and senior and middle managers have an accurate view of the standards and progress of students. Almost all departments operate very effectively and appropriate support strategies are in place for the small minority that need to improve. There is an increasing use of data, which are well used in planning, monitoring and reviewing. There are effective links between different levels of planning, for example, personal, departmental and school action and development plans. Resources are deployed very effectively and well linked to the needs of students and school priorities, such as improving accommodation.

The governors are committed, diligent and clearly focused on the priority areas for the school. They have been reassessing their role over the last year and are working on broadening their role within the school community. The specialist

status of the school has played a key role in the recent development of the school. It has had particularly beneficial effects in helping to improve teaching and learning, broadening opportunities for students, enhancing links with the community and improving resources.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</i>	School Overall	16–19
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	N/A	
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	N/A	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

<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.

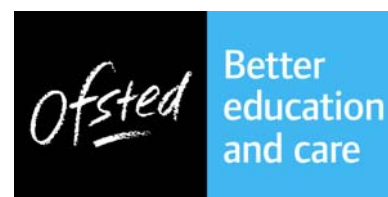
All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>1</b>	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	<b>1</b>	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>1</b>	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>1</b>	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>2</b>	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
Does this school require special measures?	<b>No</b>	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	<b>No</b>	



Sale Grammar School  
Marsland Road  
Sale  
Cheshire  
M33 3NH

22 November 2006

Dear Students

We enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so pleasant and helpful when we came to your lessons, talked with you in discussion groups or met you around the school. We also found the questionnaire completed by your parents very helpful.

We think that your school is an outstanding school that is providing you with a very good education and equipping you very well for the future. You make good progress in your studies and achieve outstanding results in your examinations. The school provides outstanding care and support for all of you with teachers keeping close track of how you are getting on in your courses. We were pleased to note that there were very few instances of bullying and that any unpleasant incidents were quickly resolved. Almost everywhere we went we found that you were keen to learn and behaved very well. We saw some outstanding teaching in lessons that you greatly enjoyed: overall, teaching is good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. You like the range of subjects you can study and particularly enjoy all the extra-curricular activities.

The senior managers of the school have an excellent understanding of all that goes on in the school and are always working to drive it forward. The specialist status of the school has greatly helped in its recent development. The school is doing very well, with only a few areas where it can improve further. We have asked the school to:

- improve performance in a small minority of departments
- further raise the achievement of the most able boys.

The inspection team hope you are pleased with the things we have said about the school and are proud of what you, your staff, governors and parents have achieved.

Yours sincerely

Heather Barnett  
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools