

# Stanground College

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 110904            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Peterborough      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 325255            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 3–4 December 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Mark Sims 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>                     | Comprehensive  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Foundation   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 11–18  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School (total)                            | 1514   |
| Sixth form                                | 139  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Lewis Gill  |
| <b>Principal</b>                          | Mr Malcolm Ellison   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 14–15 November 2007  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Peterborough Road<br>Peterborough<br>Cambridgeshire<br>PE7 3BY |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01733 564071   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01733 347626   |

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|--------------------------|-------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Stanground College is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It has had specialist status as a sports college since 2001 and has achieved the Sportsmark Award. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is slightly above the national average. There is an increasing proportion of minority ethnic students and students for whom English is an additional language but the percentages are lower than the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of educational needs, is high. The level of social deprivation in the college is average. The college holds a Leading Parent Partnership award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

**Grade: 3**

The college has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection and its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. According to one parent, 'I believe the school has improved greatly since the last inspection.' The college has made rapid improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning and the use of data to track how well students are doing. Under the focused leadership of the principal, members of the senior leadership team are united in their determination to raise standards by ensuring that the overwhelming majority of teaching is at least satisfactory and taking rigorous action where it is not. The governing body is fully supportive of the work of the college and committed to the senior leaders' drive to raise standards. The college has good capacity to improve further.

Students are reaping the benefits of this and their progress is now satisfactory throughout the college. Students join Stanground having achieved broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. These standards are maintained in both Key Stages 3 and 4 so that by the time students reach the end of Year 11 the proportion achieving five good grades at GCSE is close to the national average. In recent years, there has been a steady rise in this figure, although the proportion achieving these grades including English and mathematics has dipped slightly.

Most groups of students have benefited from improved teaching although this is not consistent. In some lessons, the needs of higher achieving students and those who find learning more difficult or are learning English as an additional language, are not met in lesson planning whilst elsewhere they are well supported. The care for vulnerable students is a significant strength of the college, although materials used to support their learning needs are not always appropriate. Students feel very safe and secure in college and report that they are well looked after. The college rightly places a high emphasis on the promotion of race equality and this has been recognised through local awards. Relationships between students are strong and they behave well.

The college has established good systems to record how well students are doing and to track their progress. Heads of subjects are developing their roles to take further responsibility, as there is some way to go to ensure that the systems are applied rigorously in all subjects and individual classes.

The sports college status has played a significant part in enriching the curriculum for students and ensuring that they and the local community have many opportunities to take advantage of the wide range of activities on offer. The strong focus on developing leadership skills and leading healthy lifestyles is having a significant impact on their personal lifestyles. The impact of the sports status on teaching and learning has been limited, however. The placing of the Italian consulate in the college has led to the college offering many benefits to the local Italian community and has the potential to be developed further as resource in promoting curriculum opportunities for students.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

**Grade: 3**

Effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Half of the students progress to the sixth form from Year 11 and between 20 and 25 students transfer from other schools each year. Attainment on joining the sixth form is broadly average and students' achievement is satisfactory. Two thirds of the students follow academic courses and the remainder study vocational courses. Standards have improved over recent years and the overall pass rate is close to the national average, although there are significant variations in performances in subjects in Year 12. All A level students study the general studies course, where achievement is outstanding. The retention rate of students is good and all but a few successfully finish their courses. Three quarters of them transfer to higher education. Most students feel that teachers are supportive, know them well and regularly review their progress. Effective assessment systems and processes for setting targets contribute well to students' achievement in some subjects. However, this is not sufficiently established to ensure consistency in all subjects. Students enjoy their sixth form studies and comment that teaching is well matched to their needs. Care for students in the sixth form is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Striking features of the most successful lessons include very good relationships and effective questioning that successfully probes learners' knowledge and understanding. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Through the consortium arrangements, the satisfactory sixth form curriculum offers a broad range of academic and vocational opportunities that meet the needs of current students well.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Secure consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by sharing more widely the very best teaching that exists in the college.
- Make sure that the information collected on student progress is used rigorously by all subject leaders to raise standards.
- Ensure that the individual needs of students are well known by all teachers and met consistently through lesson planning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 3**

Students join the college at the start of Year 7 working at levels that are in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science. Students make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 so that by the end of Year 11 standards are broadly average. The latest indicative GCSE results for 2008 indicate that the percentage of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades has increased since the previous year in line with the college's expectations and is close to the national average.

There has been a steady upward trend in GCSE results in recent years. However, the proportion gaining five good grades including, English and mathematics, fell slightly in the most recent examinations and is below the national average.

By the end of Key Stage 4, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. The proportion achieving five or more A\* to G grades fell slightly and is now just below the national average. There are no significant differences in the progress of students by gender or ethnicity, although the progress of some groups is slower in those lessons where work is inappropriate to their needs. In the sixth form, students enter Year 12 working at broadly average levels and by the time they leave at the end of Year 13 they are in line with the national average.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

Students' personal development is good. Most students enjoy lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. One parent said: 'My son enjoys school so much that even if he is sick he doesn't like to be off.' Attendance is satisfactory and rates of exclusions are falling. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall: whilst social and moral development is good, spiritual development is not planned into the curriculum and there is limited time for students to reflect on ideas. Students' understanding of cultures other than their own, especially within Britain, is limited. The Life Skills programme makes a good contribution to students' personal development. Behaviour in lessons and assemblies is good. Students are generally courteous, willing and helpful. They are confident that any bullying will be dealt with fairly and effectively. They feel the college is a safe place where they can always find someone to support them. The great majority of parents is very supportive of the college. A significant minority expressed concerns about behaviour but these were not borne out by students' opinions or by behaviour seen during the inspection. There is a high degree of racial harmony in the college.

Students take their responsibilities seriously and appreciate the impact they have on the life of the college through the school council, as sports leaders and the roles of senior students in helping younger ones. Students understand how to keep healthy and stay safe. High numbers of students participate in the physical activities provided through the sports college. Students take fundraising events seriously and raise considerable sums for charities. Community links are good through shared provision with local primary schools. Students are positive about the good personal guidance they are given so that they are able to make informed decisions about their future education and training.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and improving. They are good in the sixth form. Good relationships mean that students respond well to teachers. Teachers have good classroom control and conditions to promote better learning have been established. Activities are varied and increasing use is made of

assessment data. Most work is well marked and the quality of guidance to support students' individual needs is improving. In the most effective lessons, students are actively involved. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject; they use questioning well to probe students' understanding, and encourage them to give extended answers. In these lessons, work is challenging and the pace is brisk.

In less successful lessons, work is not matched closely enough to the needs of individual students. Expectations are not always high enough nor activities structured well enough to promote learning. There is a mixed range of provision for students who either require additional support or need extension work. The students' behaviour remains good even where the pace of lessons slows or work is not interesting. Regular systems of whole-college based lesson observations by senior teachers, linked to a clearly focused training programme, have already led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

The college provides a satisfactory curriculum that is improving all the time. Learners are well served by a curriculum that encourages their personal development. The new 'Pathways' curriculum has developed an increasing number of vocational courses and there is now a wider range of courses at appropriate levels, for example in sport in the sixth form. The curriculum developments have not yet had sufficient impact on standards and achievement, however.

Provision for basic skills is generally satisfactory but is good for supporting literacy across the curriculum. Stanground uses its specialist status as a sports college with literacy challenges that are sports-related. A leading newspaper allows their sports journalist to work with students who find difficulties with literacy. Students value the full range of sports qualifications that they have access to. Enrichment activities and out-of-hours learning are strong in sports, with such activities as rowing and American football. They are also strong in a wide variety of areas and the college is rightly proud of their 'Active Street Kids', who fuse drama and dance very successfully. The college supports the local Italian-speaking community through the placement of the Italian consulate on its site. This resource has the potential to contribute more widely to the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, but good in the sixth form. A wide range of staff from within the college offer strong care and support to individual students. Students value the way that teachers and other staff are approachable and helpful. The college works well with a comprehensive network of external agencies to provide specialised support when it is needed. Form tutors generally play a significant role in providing care and support but the college does acknowledge that there are inconsistencies in the way form tutors approach their role. Whilst the support given to students who need help with their learning and to those who speak

English as an additional language is strong in some instances, there are inconsistencies in the day-to-day practice. On other occasions, students' individual needs are not well recognised and their needs within the classroom are not met as well.

The college has developed efficient systems to track the progress of students and provide quick and effective support for those whose progress shows signs of slipping. As yet, it is too early to see the impact, as these systems are yet to be implemented with equal rigour across all curriculum areas. Support for vulnerable students is good and is improving all the time. Arrangements for health and safety are secure and there are effective procedures for safeguarding students that meet current government requirements. Procedures for child protection are known and understood and there are effective systems in place to deal with any incidents of bullying or racial harassment. All students receive satisfactory careers guidance.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

Senior leaders are strongly committed to the improvement of the college and have a shared vision for its future. Since the last inspection, the college has made good progress in developing a well-planned cycle to review subject departments involving both senior and subject leaders. As a result, leaders have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses and are more able to focus sharply on the actions necessary to secure improvement. Data is now used more rigorously to support students in their learning. Governors now know the college well and have been particularly supportive in establishing its new direction. They are now better placed to provide the necessary challenge. Self-evaluation processes are well developed although these, along with other recently introduced improvements, have yet to have a significant impact on student achievement.

The college is setting challenging targets for improvement for individual students. Equality of opportunity and community cohesion are promoted in a satisfactory way and students from different backgrounds get on well together. The sports college status has had a significant impact on the curriculum and students' personal development. It is making a very positive impact on the local community. However, the college is yet to take the strengths from this into teaching and learning. Financial management arrangements are robust and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### 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> | <b>3</b>   | <b>3</b>   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>Yes</b> |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | <b>2</b>   | <b>2</b>   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | <b>2</b>   | <b>2</b>   |

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

<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

|  |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?              | <b>3</b> | <b>2</b> |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | <b>3</b> | <b>3</b> |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | <b>3</b> | <b>2</b> |

## Leadership and management

|  |            |            |
|--|------------|------------|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?  | <b>3</b>   | <b>3</b>   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | <b>3</b>   |            |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | <b>3</b>   |            |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | <b>3</b>   | <b>3</b>   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated   | <b>3</b>   |            |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | <b>3</b>   |            |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | <b>3</b>   |            |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | <b>3</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>  |            |

## Annex B



5 December 2008

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Stanground College, Peterborough, PE7 3BY**

You will know that we recently visited your school and we thought you would like to know what we have said. Thank you to those of you who took time to talk to us and tell us your views about Stanground.

A year ago, inspectors reported that the college needed to make improvements in a number of key areas. I am pleased to report that, following the progress and hard work of everyone associated with the college, it now provides a satisfactory standard of education.

Your senior leaders have worked hard and successfully to make sure there have been improvements in the quality of your lessons and in the ways your progress in subjects is tracked. Your achievement is now in line with that found in most schools. You behave well in lessons and around college and you have told us you feel safe, secure and looked after well in college. You get on very well with each other.

You are particularly fortunate to have such very good sporting facilities and activities. Those of you in the sixth form do exceptionally well in your general studies programme.

We have suggested a few things to the college that we think will help it go on to improve further in the future.

- Make sure the quality of all your lessons matches that of the very best ones.
- Make sure that the way your progress is tracked is done so consistently in all subjects in a way that helps you to improve further in your work.
- Make sure that all of you who need either help or support in lessons, or more challenging work, are given the opportunity to receive this regularly in lessons.

I am sure you will play your part in helping the college improve further. May I take this opportunity to wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims  
Her Majesty's Inspector