

Shapwick School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and the government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

The school is a specialist independent day and residential special school. It was called Edington and Shapwick School when it was last inspected in May 2008. This name recognised that two schools, Edington and Shapwick, had amalgamated in 1974, when the school first opened, to become a single organisation. It changed its name to Shapwick School in September 2010, although it still operates on the two original sites, which are approximately five miles apart, near to Bridgwater in Somerset. There are currently 155 pupils on roll from eight to 18 years of age. Shapwick Preparatory, in Burtle, is the base for 47 boys and girls aged from eight to 13 years. Older students are based in Shapwick. There are 82 in the age range 14 to 16 years and 26 post-16 students, although the latter group follow all of their courses at a local college with tutorial support from Shapwick staff. The 98 residential pupils are housed in five residential units on three sites. Many different local authorities pay the fees of the 58 pupils who have a statement of special educational needs.

The school is owned by Kedleston (UK), a company that manages other similar schools. The main criterion for admission to the school is that pupils must have a diagnosis of dyslexia or other specific learning difficulty. The headteacher was appointed in September 2011, although he had been joint headteacher since 1984. The most recent inspection of the residential provision was in October 2010. The findings of both the education and residential provision inspections are contained in this report.

The school aims to help individual pupils, 'to grow into confident, skilled and happy adults ready to take the next stage in their life'.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

⁴ www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Evaluation of the school

Shapwick School provides an outstanding quality of education supplemented by a residential provision that is outstanding in all respects and it meets its aims very successfully. The school has addressed successfully regulatory failures at the time of the previous inspection. Consequently, the educational provision meets all regulations and the residential provision meets all national minimum standards. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure, rigorous and monitored regularly. Outstanding teaching and assessment, supported by an outstanding curriculum, enables pupils to make outstanding progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the provision for their welfare, health and safety are outstanding.

Quality of education

The outstanding and extensive curriculum on each site is carefully constructed to provide a breadth of learning opportunities and experiences that are appropriate for each age group and which cover all the required areas of learning. Post-16 students have access to the full range of courses on offer at a local college. The school's curriculum policy and schemes of work define clearly how pupils will acquire different skills, knowledge and understanding and how all subjects can contribute to their delivery and reinforcement. Given the nature of pupils' learning difficulties, particular attention is paid to all aspects of literacy, focusing on the promotion of language and communication skills generally. While this feature permeates all subjects, the school also makes available very high-quality additional provision through the work of occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and the literacy intervention programmes. As many pupils find social situations difficult to manage, the school provides a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) that includes modules on topics such as sex and relationships education and careers education.

Teaching and assessment are outstanding. Pupils' punctuality, attitudes and behaviour put them in a very good position to learn and so time is used very efficiently in lessons. Their willingness to participate in lessons means that disruptive behaviour is very rare, and when pupils' attention does wander, they are brought back on task very quickly and quietly. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations, and they are very well briefed about each pupil's literacy skills and their targets. As a result, they provide work that challenges pupils appropriately as the activities are set at a level that encourages them to tackle them independently. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely good, and praise and encouragement are used appropriately to motivate pupils and to support their learning. Resources provided meet pupils' requirements, with some extremely good 'home-made' resources available to develop their literacy and communication skills. Staff use questioning very well to check on learning, with personalised, targeted questions ensuring the inclusion of all pupils.

Staff have a good appreciation of pupils' learning and progress. Their achievement in elements of literacy, such as reading and spelling, are assessed and tracked very carefully using standardised tests. Pupils' work is marked routinely and informatively, with regular assessments used to monitor their learning and progress over time, based on the rate of their progression through National Curriculum levels. While staff use this information to evaluate individual pupils' learning, the school does not compare its whole-school assessment data with information about pupils' performance in similar schools nationally to discover the value that it adds.

The combination of high achievement in lessons, along with the support from the residential provision and a raft of enrichment activities, including extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors into school, enable pupils to learn at an accelerated rate. Pupils of all ages, including those with a statement of special educational needs, make outstanding progress from their starting points when they enter the school. Parents and carers wholeheartedly confirm that their children make significant progress while at the school and in the case of residential pupils they attribute this to the highly effective joint working of residential and school staff. As one put it, 'they both clearly understand the needs of our child'.

Parents and carers support their children's view that they are prepared very well for leaving school. Improved literacy and communication skills and much better-developed social skills ease pupils' transition into college or employment very effectively. Furthermore, their success in accredited examinations in a wide range of GCSE subjects and college courses and their much-improved numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills give them a solid academic foundation for their future lives. The residential provision makes a very effective contribution in helping pupils to acquire skills for adulthood. For instance, residential staff help to oversee and support homework, and the daily routines of the houses encourage pupils to take on responsibilities and to develop self-help skills, such as organising their own laundry.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils make outstanding progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are excellent ambassadors for the school, maturing into respectful, courteous and thoughtful young people with very good understanding of right and wrong. They are extremely supportive and tolerant of each other. Their attendance is high and their behaviour in school and in the residential provision is outstanding. They enjoy school a great deal and have very positive attitudes.

The school's highly successful emphasis on improving pupils' literacy and communication skills also produces very positive outcomes in aspects of their personal development. Pupils become more assured in social situations and in developing relationships as their confidence and self-esteem grow alongside their improving self-image. Individual speech and language therapy sessions, good-quality individual education plans and initiatives such as Pitstop, which are daily sessions that enable pupils to speak to a therapist if they appear to be having a persistent

problem with behaviour, and the Social Competence and Enhancement Programme all contribute very well to pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to use self-assessment tools to evaluate aspects of their personal development, which enables them to identify and acknowledge relatively weaker areas and to manage their own behaviour. Consequently, as they develop into more socially adept young people, they become more willing to contribute to the life and work of the school and residential communities. For instance, they can become a prefect or monitor, as well as serving on the school council or eco-committee. Contributions such as these also provide pupils with a very good understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community. They develop a very strong appreciation of wider society through elements of the curriculum such as the PSHE programme and citizenship lessons. These, along with subjects like religious education and history, and a programme of educational visits, including overseas, give pupils a range of culturally diverse experiences, promoting in them an awareness and appreciation of other cultures extremely well. In addition, staff recognise and value differences in pupils' cultural backgrounds and faiths, and so these are celebrated through, for example, varied school menus and the extra-curricular activity programme.

The residential provision supports pupils' personal development in many ways. For example, residential pupils are encouraged to become more independent by taking age-appropriate risks; senior pupils use recreational facilities in the village and post-16 students are encouraged to use public transport.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. There are excellent arrangements in place when they are in school and in the residential houses. Rigorous checks ensure the safe recruitment of staff, and health and safety policies pay due regard to national guidance. Comprehensive risk assessments and robust policies, procedures and practice in respect of child protection, first aid and fire safety ensure pupils are protected from harm both on-site and in the community. Ongoing training for school and residential staff ensures that their skills are kept up to date in all of these areas. Safeguarding procedures are excellent. Parents and carers are unanimous in their agreement that the school keeps their children safe. The pupils themselves agree.

The same detailed anti-bullying and disciplinary procedures apply in school and in the residential provision. A good number of effectively deployed staff practise them consistently and manage pupils' behaviour extremely well, through discussion, reflection and the reinforcement of clearly stated boundaries. Sanctions rarely need to be applied, although when implemented they are recorded appropriately, and physical restraint is not used. Pupils confirm that bullying is very rare and that disagreements are mostly just 'fallings out', with staff becoming quickly aware of any issue and intervening quickly to resolve them.

Excellent pastoral arrangements support pupils' academic and personal progress. One parent summed this up: 'The change in behaviour and character in our child is

amazing and they feel included in the school.’ Residential pupils are extremely positive about the relationships they have with residential staff. They make excellent progress in all aspects of their development as a result of the highly individualised plans that are in place, which are shared with education staff. Equally, individual education plans are made available to help residential staff support pupils to attain their targets. The school produces numerous informative documents for parents, carers and residential pupils which explain welfare arrangements in the houses. However, other than in the house for the youngest pupils, the handbooks are not written in a format which is easy for pupils to read and which tells them that they may raise concerns with any member of staff.

Pupils with particular health needs are able to participate fully in school and residential life as a result of the extensive care and support they receive from staff. The school makes every effort to encourage pupils to live a healthy lifestyle. Meals are nutritionally well balanced and the catering team has achieved a five-star award from the local county council. Physical education lessons, the residential activity programme and participation in activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme provide very many opportunities for regular exercise. The school maintains a safe environment, with regular checks of the premises, grounds and electrical and fire-fighting equipment. The admission and attendance registers meet requirements, and the school fulfils the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Residential staff have received training in the administration of medication and, while procedures meet the required minimum standards, they do not meet best practice guidelines on the storage, administration and recording of medication. There is a missing-persons policy in place and staff know what action to take should a child be missing.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Rigorously applied recruitment and vetting procedures are in place. Checks are thorough and staff files contain all the information that is required prior to a new appointment beginning work, and all required information is held centrally in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

Educational premises on both sites are maintained to an adequate standard. The Shapwick Preparatory site is self-contained, with sufficient classrooms of ample size, including specialist areas for subjects such as ICT and art. Outdoor areas provide good opportunities for pupils to participate in organised and free play. Teaching accommodation in Shapwick is in three locations a short walk apart. It comprises a mixture of general teaching areas and appropriately equipped specialist accommodation for subjects such as science and design and technology. Extensive grounds include playing fields, an all-weather, multi-use games area, and sports hall.

A programme of continual improvement and development has produced an excellent standard of provision throughout each residential house. Bedrooms are equipped and furnished to an extremely high standard, with very good quality and durable furniture. Generous showering and washing provision in each house provides excellent levels of privacy. Residential communal areas are extremely comfortable, with large sofas, a television and an abundance of books, games and games consoles.

Provision of information

The school has addressed fully the unmet regulations reported at the last inspection. Parents, carers and local authorities are provided with all the required information, and are made aware of documents that can be requested. The school's website is extremely informative and includes a large number of policies and procedures.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedure for registering a complaint was incomplete when the school was last inspected. This has been amended to include reference to the establishment of a panel to hear complaints that have not been resolved by a written response by the school. The procedure now meets all requirements.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Leadership and management are outstanding, thereby maintaining the excellent standards identified in the most recent inspection report. All national minimum care standards are met. Such very effective leadership is responsible for outstanding residential provision and care, which produces excellent outcomes for pupils. Leaders have an astute understanding of the residential units' functioning and of how to develop them, which includes listening to pupils' suggestions and responding to independent visitors' comments.

Leaders have established residential houses that are highly inclusive communities. Pupils confirm that the school treats them fairly, and a significant number of parents and carers report that their children are understood, accepted and included. Many point to their children taking part in activities from which they have been excluded in previous schools, and in developing friendships, when previously they have found this very difficult.

Residential staff are very well supported. New staff pursue a well-constructed induction programme that familiarises them with all policies and procedures, which are comprehensive and implemented consistently. Ongoing professional development updates staff's expertise in areas such as first aid and child protection. A particularly impressive feature is the extent to which leaders ensure that the residential team communicates and works collaboratively with other staff to produce an integrated approach to supporting and guiding pupils. Pupils' files, including individual education plans, are comprehensive records that contain the information necessary to ensure

the application of common strategies to promote pupils' learning and personal development.

Residential staff are deployed efficiently. Pupils indicate that there are always sufficient staff on duty to meet their needs and that they are easily accessible. The vast majority of parents and carers confirm that there are strong channels of communication with the residential units.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').⁵

National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated regulations.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- develop systems to compare the school's own assessment data with information about pupils' performance in similar school nationally
- ensure that all information provided to residential pupils is written in a child-friendly format and tells them that they may raise concerns with any member of staff
- provide residential staff with written guidance that incorporates best practice guidelines on the storage, administration and recording of medication.

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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Overall effectiveness of the residential experience

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	✓			
Outcomes for residential pupils	✓			
Quality of residential provision and care	✓			
Residential pupils' safety	✓			
Leadership and management of the residential provision	✓			

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Day and residential special		
Date school opened	1974		
Age range of pupils	8–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 112	Girls: 43	Total: 155
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 73	Girls: 25	Total: 98
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 47	Girls: 11	Total: 58
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,184 to £14,850 depending on age		
Annual fees (boarders)	£18,588 to £21,351 depending on age and nature of the residential arrangements		
Address of school	Shapwick Manor Shapwick Bridgwater Somerset TA7 9NJ		
Telephone number	01458 210384		
Email address	office@shapwickschool.com		
Headteacher	Jon Whittock		
Proprietor	Kedleston UK		

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.



9 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shapwick School, Bridgwater TA7 9NJ

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school and residential houses. Particular thanks go to those of you who spoke with us. You obviously enjoy school and get a great deal of pleasure staying in the residential houses. The vast majority of you told us that your school does a really good job, and we agree with you. Shapwick School provides you with an excellent education, and the houses give you an outstanding residential experience.

We were very impressed with you as mature and courteous young people. Your attitudes are very good and your behaviour is excellent. You learn a great deal in lessons and make excellent progress in your work. This helps to prepare you very well for leaving school. The school and residential houses provide an excellent variety of interesting activities during the day and in out-of-school time. Those who run your school want to make it even better and we have them given ideas to help:

- compare the progress that you make in your work with that made by pupils of similar age in schools elsewhere
- ensure that residential staff follow the best possible procedures for storing, administering and recording medication
- make sure that all information given to residential pupils is written in a way that they can easily understand, and tells them that they may raise concerns with any member of staff.

Finally, I wish each of you every success in the future, especially if you are taking examinations and leaving school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell
Lead inspector