

Shepshed High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120257
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	358727
Inspection dates	14–15 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	10–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	505
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Riggall
Headteacher	Adrian Stephenson
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors who observed 29 teachers in 29 lessons. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and groups of students. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its analysis of students' attainment and achievement and its projections for the future, the school development plan and the minutes of the governing body's meetings. They analysed responses on staff and student questionnaires and the 158 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- It explored the effectiveness of the planning for the needs of pupils in Year 6, so that they make at least the progress that they should through the year.
- It investigated the accuracy of the school's judgment that the achievement of all groups of students is good.
- It collected evidence to determine how targets are used in lessons to help students accelerate their progress.

Information about the school

This is a small school compared to others of its type. It shares a campus with a primary school and an upper school and works collaboratively with the upper school, Hind Leys College. Most students are White British. An above-average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities, of which the majority are specific learning difficulties.

The school provides enhanced resource provision for ten pupils with autism, through a shared facility with Hind Leys College. It works in partnership with 11 primary schools as well as Hind Leys College and Castle Donington Community College, in order to share resources and training for staff. The school was awarded Healthy Schools Status in 2008. In 2009 it was re-accredited with the Careers Mark and in 2010 it was re-accredited with the Basic Skills Mark. It has recently attained the International Schools Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school focuses equally on promoting students' personal and inter-personal skills and their academic progress. It is successful in both areas as they achieve well and develop confidence and self-esteem. They display positive attitudes to school and learning, reflected in their above-average attendance and good behaviour. Students have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school and the community while making good progress in their learning. All of this takes place within a safe and secure environment, backed up by effective safeguarding procedures.

Planning for the arrival of pupils into Year 6 is wide-ranging and carefully coordinated. As a result of good partnerships with staff at the feeder schools, staff have accurate information about the pupils, backed up by their own findings. Together with regular opportunities for them to be taught in the school and familiarise themselves with the routines, they settle quickly. Year 6 pupils find the mentoring roles of Year 9 students and their involvement in their academic progress very helpful in assisting their transition, as well as the mixed-age tutor groups. As a result, they make satisfactory and accelerating progress through the year, supported by organisation and methods of learning that fit their needs well.

Students attain average levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 9, reflecting good progress over time from their below-average attainment on entry. Key factors in this are regularly good teaching and focused support for students who find some learning difficult or who have specific needs, including those in the enhanced resource provision. Detailed tracking of their achievement leads to support that is based on specific needs and accelerates progress. Some inconsistency stops progress being faster and more even. Assessment information, while sometimes used exceptionally well to promote progress, is not always used carefully enough in planning work that closely matches students' needs, particularly for those capable of reaching higher levels in English and mathematics. Their tasks do not, as a matter of course, enable them to apply the skills that they have learnt or promote other higher-order skills. Many students know their targets, and their impact in driving progress in lessons is often good. In the best lessons, they are integral to learning, reviewed and updated regularly and students have clear ownership of them. However, the use of targets to support learning varies too much.

Senior leaders and managers have a comprehensive knowledge of the school's performance and their evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. Strategies, based on regular, rigorous monitoring, are pertinent and effective and result in accurate judgements about the needs of the school. However, actions to address them are not always put in place as promptly as they could be by all leaders. The governing body demonstrates, through its good grasp of the school's performance and its own monitoring, the ability to influence the school's future direction. It contributes significantly to the school's good

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capacity to move further forward. This capacity is confirmed by the positive impact of the school's actions to bring about improvement, the cohesiveness of communication and the way community leaders as well as subject leaders are involved in developing the whole student.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly in English and mathematics, and at higher levels, by making sure that:
 - the good quality information about students' progress is always used to plan tasks that match accurately the levels at which they work and to provide a good level of challenge
 - findings from the monitoring of teaching and assessment are always addressed promptly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Effective teaching throughout the year is the starting point for pupils' good achievement. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are aided by accurate and specific support to match their individual needs. The needs of autistic students are met well by knowledgeable staff, supported by good leadership and management, so that they can make progress at a good rate. There is not always an accurate level of challenge for all students, especially those with the potential to reach higher levels in English and mathematics, as tasks are not always chosen carefully enough to extend their learning. Thus, fewer students achieve higher levels than are capable of doing so, particularly in mathematics. However, good practice was seen in a range of subjects. In a French lesson, students worked at a brisk pace and remained focused throughout because challenging tasks, presented in a variety of learning styles, made them think carefully about the tenses that they should use. Consequently, they made good progress in their grammatical skills. In an art lesson, the step-by-step teaching, emphasis on producing the best possible clay slab and the enjoyment of the students in working independently, resulted in students' good quality workmanship.

Students say that they enjoy school. There are wide-ranging opportunities for them to join in activities and take on responsibilities both in school and within the community. Notable among these are mentoring of younger students and the effective role of the school council in making improvements to, for example, school menus. At the same time, students develop a good understanding of the nature of society and the diversity of cultures and, through discussions, can increasingly make a balanced judgement about ethical and religious situations. Many enthusiastically take part in sporting activities, in lessons and out of school time. A large majority try hard to adopt healthy lifestyles, including eating nutritious foods, and show a good understanding of the importance of making well-informed lifestyle choices. Students benefit from a good personal development programme and are supportive towards each other. Together with the vigilance of the staff, these help them all to feel safe in school. Supported by their average attainment by the end of Year 9, students demonstrate sound preparation for the next stage of their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Students settle well in lessons, encouraged by positive relationships with staff. The focus of learning is always made clear and in some lessons, regularly revisited. Activities at the beginning of lessons are often interesting so that students are fully engaged from the start. They enjoy practising what they have learnt, either independently or in groups, although on occasions the teacher's input goes on for too long. Students' ownership of their learning has been considerably strengthened in some lessons by their good knowledge of their targets and their focus in learning. However, the use of assessment information in lessons varies and so does its impact on students' progress. The quality of marking also varies. Good practice seen was in English where it is meticulous, telling students exactly what they have achieved and their next steps in learning. Increasingly, students evaluate their own progress towards their goals, as they move through the school. Some sharply-focused questioning by teachers directed students' learning effectively in a number of lessons. The curriculum focuses primarily on raising students' attainment in English and mathematics from Year 6 onwards. Increasingly, it is matched well to students' needs and interests through, for example teaching through modules for students in Year 7 to Year 9. Links across subjects also promote students' good personal development. A strength of the curriculum is the partnerships with other schools which broaden provision. While workshops for gifted and talented students are a good aspect of partnership work with other schools, provision for such students is not a feature of classroom teaching. Information and communication technology skills are practised

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through a variety of subjects so that students can develop and refine their skills regularly, as well as learn independently. The Year 9 key skills placement gives students a good breadth of activities, encouraging leadership, decision-making and understanding of life in the community as well as the opportunity to learn skills in subjects that are not a regular feature of the curriculum. Provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. The needs of autistic students are met well through broad-ranging, personalised programmes. Popular after-school activities, which cater for a range of interests, extend students' learning and enjoyment.

Good communication between the academic and pastoral staff is a major factor in the effective care, guidance and support of students. They speak positively of the care and interest that the staff show in them, which promotes their self-esteem and sense of security. It is backed up by students' good understanding of systems, practices and procedures to keep them safe. The school considers carefully the needs, circumstances and concerns of the students when making decisions about how to best support and guide them. As a result, the attendance of some students, and their attitudes to learning and to others have improved. This work has been supported by a specialist team of teaching assistants who support students in their care very appropriately. Carefully-planned arrangements for starting and leaving the school, for example, are appreciated by students, who say that they are confident about the new challenges facing them. Mixed-age tutor groups are helpful for the support of new students and for promoting the good personal development of all.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The responsibilities of staff at all layers of leadership and management are clear. Comprehensive and regular auditing and monitoring of provision and outcomes ensure that the school has an accurate understanding of its performance. This includes good monitoring of teaching and learning practices. The response of leaders to findings is not, however, as prompt as it should be in every subject, resulting in some inconsistencies in practice. The school has a strong focus on equality of opportunity and, as a result, different groups of students achieve equally well. It includes those students who are provided for through the enhanced resource provision, which is led effectively. The school tackles discrimination effectively, with few reported incidents. The staff share the school's vision and drive to move further forward. Similarly, the governing body has a good knowledge of the school's work, increasingly gained through its own monitoring. Its overseeing of safeguarding is effective because policies and practices are organised and reviewed efficiently, leading to improvements, for example, in the induction of staff.

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Governors' attendance at school events means that parents and carers can have regular access to them, as well as the staff. Parents and carers support their children's learning and development in a range of ways. Their stake in their children's targets through consultations and reports home, and through individual guidance to meet particular needs, demonstrates the school's strong home-school links. Other partnerships are also effective, particularly those with outside agencies and with other schools, which strengthen the work of the school, especially in promoting students' well-being. The school's partnership with Hind Leys College, in which the curriculum is increasingly planned jointly, helps to ensure continuity and progression. The school promotes community cohesion well, though opportunities for students to interact with the local community, and to make links globally. National links are less well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, almost all were happy with their child's experience at the school and agreed that the school keeps their child safe and informs them about their child's progress. Most strongly agreed or agreed with every other aspect. In particular, parents and carers praised the quality of support for those children with specific needs and the availability of the staff. There were wide-ranging comments, most of which were individual questions, queries or concerns. The issues raised have been shared with the headteacher, while preserving the confidentiality of the respondents. He is keen to address them. A few parents and carers recorded concerns about whether work is always challenging enough for more-able students. The school acknowledges it is an issue and this point was reinforced by the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shepshed High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 158 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 505 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	47	76	48	6	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	85	54	71	45	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	65	41	89	57	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	41	86	55	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	36	95	61	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	33	86	55	12	8	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	26	104	66	5	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	51	32	93	59	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	35	94	60	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	36	84	54	7	4	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	31	96	61	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	36	95	61	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	46	81	52	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



16 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Shepshed High School, Loughborough LE12 9DA

Thank you for your helpful contribution to the recent inspection of your school. Your views were important to us in making our judgements about its effectiveness. I also thank you, on behalf of the inspection team, for your politeness and helpfulness.

Your school is a good school in which you make good progress. This is helped by your above-average attendance and good behaviour. Your attainment is average. The quality of teaching and the curriculum help you to make progress. While most teaching is good, it does not always help you in English and mathematics to move forward as quickly as you could. This is because activities are not always based closely enough on the good information that the school has about the levels at which you work. It is particularly the case for those of you who are capable of reaching higher levels. We have asked the headteacher to address this. He is also going to make sure that subject leaders check the quality of assessment practices in their areas, including how your targets are used, and that findings are acted upon to help raise your levels of attainment. Support for you, both pastorally and academically, is good. Its main strength is based on the staff knowing your specific needs well and helping you to address them. Arrangements for students joining Year 6 are thought out particularly well.

The school gives you a broad education so that you can develop a range of skills and qualities. The Year 9 placement is a good innovation in extending your skills and knowledge of the wider world. The school's partnerships with other schools, organisations and agencies also broaden opportunities for you. We were pleased to see that many of you take part in activities after school.

We hope that you will help the school to enable you to reach higher levels by working as hard as you can and by focusing on your targets for improvement.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock

Lead inspector

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