

# Sheredes School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117538
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358154
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	685
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	115
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dave Warren
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Cock Lane Hoddesdon EN11 8JY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 410800
<b>Fax number</b>	01992 410801
<b>Email address</b>	admin@sheredes.herts.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They made visits to 34 lessons taught by 31 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation such as the school improvement plan, assessment records and safeguarding policies. They analysed completed questionnaires from staff and pupils, as well as 39 from parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which students are making enough progress in English and mathematics especially in Key Stage 3.
- How well subjects across the curriculum are helping to develop students' literacy skills.
- The effectiveness of school leaders in driving up standards of attainment and securing tangible improvements.

## Information about the school

This smaller than average secondary school serves a wide catchment area covering South East Hertfordshire and the Epping Forest area of Essex. The large majority of students are White British. About 13% are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds with about 9% speaking English as an additional language. Both these figures have been rising steadily over the last three years and are higher than in the majority of schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little below average. More students than is usual join the school midway through their secondary education, especially into Year 10. About 10% of pupils are known to be eligible for a free school meal, and this is broadly average. The school has achieved the Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark awards.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Sheredes School provides a satisfactory and improving education for its students. Attainment is rising securely and quickly and attendance, which was an issue at the time of the last inspection, is now satisfactory. Students enjoy school and are keen to do well. There is a growing culture of high aspirations; this is particularly evident in Year 11 where students readily take up the opportunities for further study and revision after school, at weekends and during holidays so as to improve their chances of getting good GCSE results. The school has made significant progress over the last few years in developing its provision and ensuring secure teaching and learning. The performing arts area is a particular strength of the school and supports students' personal and academic development well.

While the 2010 results at the end of Key Stage 4 were low, they were a marked improvement on those of previous years. Against some indicators, such as the proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSEs, results were in line with national averages. However, they were below average in English and mathematics. Sustained work this year on improving attainment has led to further improvements. Current Year 11 students are on track to gain results in English and mathematics at GCSE that are in line with national averages. Year 10 students are further ahead in their studies at this point than previous year groups have been. Students make satisfactory progress and some are making good progress. In recent years, progress across Key Stage 4 has been better than in Key Stage 3 and students in the past have often underachieved across Years 7 to 9. This has now turned around and students' current progress across Key Stage 3, including in English and mathematics, is satisfactory with pockets of good progress. However, more-able students do not progress fast enough as they move through the school. Efforts in the past to raise attainment have been focused on middle and lower ability students attaining the nationally expected levels or grades, such as a C grade at GCSE, with less focus on enabling higher ability students to achieve the higher grades. Though the school is now setting challenging targets for more-able students, the work they are given in many lessons does not extend them sufficiently. Students have good oral skills and teachers encourage extended oral answers through effective questioning. However, opportunities are limited, in English and other subjects, for students to develop and extend their writing.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the proportion of good or better lessons is increasing steadily. Many lessons seen were good with some that were outstanding. Teachers develop good relationships with students and make clear to them what they will be learning. In a minority of lessons, pace is slow and often there is too much whole class teaching which limits the opportunities for students to work independently or learn through pair and group work. It also makes it more difficult for teachers to match work more precisely to the needs of different ability groups.

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Under the good leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders form a cohesive team who work in an informed and consistent way to support and develop the school's provision. They know the school well and use self-evaluation effectively as a tool to identify and address key weaknesses that get in the way of students' achievement. The senior leadership team is still relatively new though it has successfully secured key improvements. It is in the process of strengthening the roles of middle leaders in order to secure consistently good provision across the school. The capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment further, especially in English and mathematics, by ensuring that more-able students are sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - providing students with well structured activities that engage them actively and reducing the amount of whole class teaching
  - ensuring that lessons are well paced with good use being made of time to develop learning.
- Providing students with more opportunities to produce extended writing in English and other subjects.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students begin their secondary education with attainment that is overall below average due largely to low levels of literacy amongst many. Comparatively few students have attained high levels in English and mathematics at the end of their primary education. Progress and achievement are satisfactory and improving, especially in Key Stage 3. Students make good progress in some subjects such as performing arts and physical education (PE). Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, and some make good progress. One-to-one tuition and support in lessons helps these students to meet the targets in their action plans. Students who speak English as an additional language, many of whom are beginners and join after the start of Year 7, make rapid gains in learning English. They achieve creditable results at GCSE.

Students are usually keen to learn and to answer questions, sometimes shouting out answers in their enthusiasm. They can lose focus and concentration when introductions are overlong. In contrast, when given the opportunities to do so, they work well to complete activities in groups or pairs. For example, in a mathematics lesson students who were chatty and not listening too well became engrossed in identifying and matching cards where the percentages, fractions or decimals were of equal value. They worked in pairs, helping one another to do the relevant calculations to match the right cards. Most students express ideas well when speaking, and this provides good models of English language speaking for students who speak English as an additional language. However, students' written English is not as good. They do not do enough extended writing either in

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English or other subjects. Spelling and grammar are often weak. More-able students are not challenged enough. For example, they wait in lessons for others to catch up or finish. As a result, they do not always reach the higher levels or grades of which they are capable.

Most students behave well in lessons and around the school though are sometimes boisterous. The exclusion rate is declining rapidly and the school is now working on cutting down the number of students who have to be removed from lessons due to behaviour. Students' social skills are good and they have a good understanding of right and wrong. They have increasing opportunities to reflect on life's important questions. Their enthusiasm for the arts is inspired by the strong provision in the art, performing arts and photography and reflects the school's Artsmark Gold award. This enables students to develop good understanding of Britain's cultural heritage. However, their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and religions is a little insecure because they do not have enough first hand experiences of them. Students from different cultural backgrounds get on well with one another and describe their experience as 'being part of a big family.' Students feel, and are, safe at school. They are confident that the school will deal with issues of safety quickly and effectively. Bullying is rare.

All students, when they leave school, go onto further or higher education, training or employment. This coupled with their good skills of team work and improving literacy and numeracy skills, means students are satisfactorily prepared for future life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

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

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## How effective is the provision?

Most teachers have established good relationships with their students and this helps to gain their cooperation in lessons. Increasingly accurate assessment information is well used to identify clear learning objectives and draw up checklists by which teachers and students can assess learning. Teachers clearly identify the individual needs of students in their plans and use a range of strategies such as resources, teaching assistants or additional help from themselves to support these needs. However, they do not often provide different work for different ability groups and, usually, this means work is too easy for the most able. It is sometimes hard for lower attaining students. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards and choose interesting resources. Where teaching is good, activities are varied and engage students well. Many lessons are too closely directed by teachers with students expected to listen rather than participate actively. Oral feedback to students is frequent and helpful and teachers refer regularly to levels and grades so that students are clear about the quality of work needed to achieve their target level or grade. However, they cannot always precisely identify how to improve their own work, especially in Key Stage 3, because marking does not provide enough written guidance for improvement.

Planning for English and mathematics is satisfactory and ensures a steady progression of skills across most strands. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' oral skills in English and across the curriculum but less so on writing. A clear range of pathways are in place at Key Stage 4 to support the differing needs of students and the availability of a wider range of subjects is increasing student options especially for the more able. A range of programmes effectively supports the needs of lower attainers and ensures any who have fallen behind catch up. However, planning takes limited account of prior learning at primary school. The school provides a rich range of extra-curricular activities, and visits and visitors in the performing arts and PE, and the take up is high.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Students are well cared for and vulnerable students are well supported with the help of a wide range of external agencies and professionals. Students talk warmly about the student support centre and how it has supported their needs. Systems for raising attendance are being strengthened with, for example, the appointment recently of an attendance officer. The school's strategies to reduce persistent absence have had some impact but not sufficient to fully address this.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear vision for the future development of the school. The senior leadership team is effective in improving students' performance and raising attainment. Members of the team are pulling in the same direction and working systematically and effectively with staff to improve teaching and learning. There is some variation in the extent to which this responsibility is shouldered by middle leaders. Not all heads of subject are effective enough in leading their areas and some are new to role. The roles of heads of year are being restructured to include sharper focus on improving attendance and attainment.

The governing body maintains sound oversight of the work of the school and members engage in challenging discussions with senior leaders. They ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place. Child protection procedures are robust and meet requirements. Risk assessments and health and safety audits are rigorous and overseen by the governing body.

The school monitors students' academic performance and other outcomes by different groups to ensure equality of opportunity is sound. Although attainment for all groups is improving, there is some unevenness in the rate of progress, especially for more-able students and between different subjects. Community cohesion at school level is strong and there are examples of good engagement with local community groups, especially through the work done in subjects such as performing arts and PE. The school has begun to establish links with contrasting schools in Britain and abroad to address the identified gap in students' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures through first hand experiences.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>



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## Sixth form

Attainment on entry to the sixth form has been below average to date. Provision supports outcomes for students that are generally satisfactory, and sometimes good. Students make good progress in Year 13 and, though results in the past have been low, they are improving. The 2010 A level results were close to national averages. Progress in Year 12, though largely satisfactory, is more uneven and AS results not as good. There is some unevenness in students' performance across different subjects at both A and AS level. This is reflected in the quality of teaching which is satisfactory overall. Students' skills of independent learning are not fully embedded across all subjects and sometimes lessons are too teacher directed. Where teaching is good, students have good opportunities to practise skills on their own. A good range of subjects are offered. A new head of sixth form has, with the support of school leaders, rapidly identified and established strategies to address the weaknesses in provision so as to enable better progress. These have yet to have full impact but signs of improvement are evident in, for example, the increased recruitment to the sixth form and the increasingly better match of students to courses. Students make a good contribution to the local community and the school through mentoring, charitable activities and the school council.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

Although the response rate from parents and carers to the questionnaire was relatively low, those who responded are very positive about the school and what it offers their children. They are particularly pleased with the way the school looks after their children, the quality of teaching and how the school meets their child's particular needs. Parents and carers are pleased with the overall experience of their children. Some feel the school does not do enough to help their children adopt healthy lifestyles or take enough account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspection evidence indicates that students do adopt healthy lifestyles. The curriculum encourages healthy eating and regular exercise, reflected in the Activemark award. The school is aware of, and addressing, concerns expressed by students about school meals, such as too much cheese and the high cost of a bottle of water. Tap water is made available. The school regularly surveys parents and carers and consults them but acknowledges it can do more to feedback to them about how it takes account of their views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sheredes 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 685 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	46	18	46	3	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	46	20	51	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	46	19	49	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	51	16	41	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	33	25	64	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	33	22	56	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	23	25	64	5	13	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)	16	41	19	49	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	46	19	49	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	28	24	62	3	8	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	28	22	56	5	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	38	22	56	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	49	20	51	0	0	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



19 January 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Sheredes School, Hoddesdon, EN11 8JY**

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to give us your views during the recent inspection. We think that the school provides you with a satisfactory and improving education. Most of you make the progress expected of you and some of you achieve well. The school does not always do enough to help more able students achieve higher levels and grades. Some of the key strengths of the school are listed below.

The improving performance at GCSE.

The way in which you are looked after which makes you feel safe at school.

The strong provision both in school and through extra-curricular activities in the performing arts which helps you to make good progress and develop confidence and cultural understanding.

You develop your speaking skills well and this means you can express your ideas and explain your work.

The good care and support you receive through the student support centre.

The way in which your headteacher leads the school and works with senior staff to improve the quality of the education you are receiving.

In order to make the school even better and to improve standards of work, we have asked the school to work at improving the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that all lessons provide challenging work, especially for more-able students; that you are more actively involved in your learning and that lessons are well paced. We have also asked the school to help you to improve your writing by giving you more opportunities to write at length and practise these skills in English and other subjects.

Keep working hard and asking for help when you need it. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gulshanbir Kayembe

Lead inspector

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