

Sherburn High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121695
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	359069
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Philip Jarrett HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	781
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Lewis
Headteacher	Mr Martyn Sibley
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2007
School address	Garden Lane Sherburn-in-Elmet, Leeds West Yorkshire LS25 6AS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 36 lessons, taught by 36 different teachers. They held meetings with groups of students, staff and governors. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of other evidence including lesson plans, school policies, assessment data and case study files. They also looked at all the questionnaires completed by students and staff, and at the 215 questionnaires completed 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.

- The effectiveness of current plans to improve achievement in English and mathematics.
- Action taken to improve teaching to determine whether it is having a positive impact on learning across the school.
- The capacity of the current school leadership to drive through continued improvement, including in the sixth form.
- The effectiveness of arrangements to support students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

Sherburn High School is a smaller than average comprehensive school for students aged 11-19. Student numbers have fallen since the previous inspection but the number of students joining Year 7 is starting to rise again. Almost all students are of White British background. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There are also below average numbers of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is a specialist science school. It has received a number of awards including Investors in People, Healthy School status and the Sports Mark. The school has been through a period of substantial turbulence that included the dissolution of the governing body and the formation of a temporary federation with another local secondary school. Stability has now been restored. A new headteacher was appointed in 2010. Furthermore, there have been changes to key members of staff, and a shadow governing body has now been established.

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

2

Main findings

Sherburn High School is a satisfactory but improving school. It has changed substantially over the past couple of years and especially since the appointment of the current headteacher. Several parents and carers used the same phrase in their questionnaires, saying that the school was going "from strength to strength" under the new leadership. Another commented that "the whole atmosphere and ethos have changed for the better." These changes have led to improvements in teaching and behaviour. Senior leaders and managers are very clear about weaknesses and the action that needs to be taken. Self-evaluation is accurate and honest as a result of good monitoring, effective analysis of data and thoughtful leadership. There is already much evidence of better progress across many areas of the school. As a result, the capacity for further improvement is good.

Attainment is broadly average at the end of Key Stage 4, and in the sixth form, and progress is satisfactory. GCSE results in English and mathematics were below average last year. However, improvements in teaching and leadership have resulted in higher standards in both subjects. Teaching remains variable in quality across the school although comments from both parents and carers, and students, confirm the inspection view that teaching is improving. Students are keen to learn and behave well in lessons. They made good progress in the majority of lessons observed during the inspection. Where teaching was less effective, learning was constrained by weaknesses such as poor marking, planning that did not match students' needs or challenge the most able, and a concentration on activities rather than learning. Inspectors observed many good, and some outstanding, lessons and there is much good practice already evident on which senior and middle leaders can build.

This is a very orderly and caring school. Relationships are strong and students feel very safe. Their progress is monitored closely and effective guidance helps them move smoothly through the school and into adult life. Support for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable is good. Behaviour was good throughout the inspection and many students spoke of the positive impact of recent changes, including clearer sanctions for poor behaviour and more emphasis on rewards for good behaviour. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets students' needs. The school is introducing a number of changes to develop and reinforce skills across the curriculum. There are also clear plans for developing the sixth form including closer curriculum links with another secondary school and reviewing aspects of pastoral care.

The headteacher and senior leadership team have made a considerable difference to the school. They have strengthened monitoring of students' progress, improved links with parents and the local community, and generated a professional dialogue about teaching and learning. Importantly, they have gained the confidence of staff and generated a

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shared sense of purpose. As one member of staff wrote: "the school has a brighter future and we are all going in the right direction."

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers' plans focus explicitly on learning outcomes rather than activities that do not contribute directly to students' progress
 - improving students' understanding of the next steps in their learning through better marking and feedback
 - setting consistently high expectations of the performance of more able students
 - providing guidance for teachers on how to plan successfully to meet the needs of the different groups of students in each class, including effective joint working with teaching assistants.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry to the school is average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 rose in a number of areas last year and was broadly average overall. Achievement in English and mathematics was below average. However, results from the November GCSE examinations indicate that there has been a substantial improvement in the proportion of students gaining grade C+ in English. There is also evidence of better progress in mathematics from unit assessments in both Year 10 and Year 11. Students enjoy learning and rates of progress are improving. There are no significant differences in progress between groups of students in the school, including those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Students have positive attitudes towards learning although where teaching lacks challenge, they tend to become passive. Students work well together and can take leadership roles, for example in small group work, when required. They are mostly confident in expressing their views and listen respectfully to others. They persevere with tasks and show high levels of engagement and enthusiasm when the teaching is stimulating. They want to do well although standards of presentation are variable.

Students say that they feel very safe in school. Behaviour is good around the school because students mostly respond sensibly and show mutual respect. Students form good relationships with other students and with adults. They are polite and friendly. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and, through their behaviour, show that they value others. They are prepared well for the world beyond school. Nearly all students go into further education or employment when they leave the school and a wide range of enterprise and other activities helps them develop the skills they will need. Although there is a good range of sporting activities available, a small minority of students and parents and carers believe that the school could do more to encourage healthy lifestyles, especially regarding their diet.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	2
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?

Teaching has improved although the school accepts that there is more to be done to ensure consistency across departments. Relationships in lessons are good. Some lessons observed showed the positive impact of recent developments in teaching with good emphasis on pace, variety, the use of effective starter activities and engaging tasks that motivated students well. There was good use of group work and an emphasis on students being actively involved in learning and reviewing progress. In the best lessons, expectations were high and able students were well challenged. In weaker lessons, students were not as engaged because the work did not match their ability and teaching focused on methods and activities at the expense of planning for learning. Teaching assistants supported students with special educational needs and/or disabilities well although opportunities were sometimes missed for closer joint planning with teachers to ensure the best possible use of other adults in the classroom. All students have targets in their different subjects and these are reviewed systematically in form groups. However, marking is not yet consistent enough in providing effective feedback to students and helping them to understand how they can achieve these targets.

The curriculum is being developed in distinct and innovative ways. There is increasing emphasis on integrating subjects at Key Stage 3 and reinforcing skills such as literacy across the curriculum. The curriculum is broadened at Key Stage 3 through opportunities to study a second modern foreign language, courses in performing arts, and the Skills for

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Life programme in Year 7. There is a choice of different pathways at Key Stage 4. Some vocational courses are offered in school and with local partners, and around one quarter of the current Year 11 students follow part of their curriculum beyond school. Many of the recent curriculum initiatives are in the early stage of development and have not yet had a full impact on outcomes for students. The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities, chiefly in sport, alongside opportunities for additional support in subjects including English, mathematics and technology.

Students are well cared for. Staff have created a welcoming environment in the school and new students settle quickly. Parents praise the smooth induction process from primary schools which is sensitive and meets the needs of students. Procedures to support students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good and enable them to develop their social and emotional skills particularly well. Classroom teachers have a good understanding of their needs. Guidance given to students at different transition points in the school is effective and enables students to make informed choices. Effective policies have helped attendance to be better than average with low rates of persistent absenteeism.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school, based on a strong sense of community, valuing everyone and achieving high standards. Students comment that "everything" has changed since his appointment. His vision includes delegating responsibility to others and this is working well through an effective senior leadership team and improvements in subject leadership. The headteacher is well supported by other members of staff who are equally keen to see standards of teaching and attainment raised. As a result, there is a positive and collaborative ethos throughout the school.

There has been considerable focus on improving teaching. This has been effective although more remains to be done. Teachers work systematically in cross-subject groups to share good practice, learn from each other and evaluate impact. This has led to improvements in lesson planning, questioning techniques and reviewing progress within lessons. The school's science specialism has contributed to subject developments in local primary schools but senior leaders and managers accept that it has had limited impact on teaching and learning in the high school.

Staff appreciate the work of the shadow governing body. Key governors have a very clear understanding of the school's needs and provide strong support and challenge. They have worked very closely with staff since the interim governing body was formed and provide a

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wide range of experience, both within education and beyond. Systems for safeguarding are robust. There is a good understanding of child protection issues and quality assurance and accountability are strong. Support for individual students is good and inter-agency work has a positive impact. The school is an inclusive place where all are valued and equality promoted. There are strong links with the local community and a good understanding of its needs. The school has introduced initiatives that reach out beyond the school and to the wider global community, although planning and evaluation of community cohesion are less systematic.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

There is a positive ethos in the sixth form. Students show a pride in their school and have a high regard for their teachers. They enjoy their studies and contribute well to the school and local community, appreciating the wide range of enrichment activities available. Students speak of a real sense of belonging and strong community spirit. A number of sixth formers support other students, for instance by assisting teachers in class or mentoring younger students. Students are prepared well for adult life. Outcomes are satisfactory but improving. Most students make at least satisfactory progress although there are substantial differences in performance across subjects and courses. The school is aware of this. There is now a more rigorous tracking system which is sharply focused on ensuring that students have a clear understanding of priorities for improvement. The curriculum is improving. There are currently too few courses available to cater for the needs of all students, including the less academic, and the school is working to fill this gap through closer partnership with a local secondary school. Teaching is satisfactory. The most effective lessons observed were well planned, with a range of strategies and good use of assessment to help students reflect on what they need to do to improve. Senior leaders have a good understanding of what needs to be done and there is a good

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emphasis on driving standards up through more rigorous and frequent monitoring of teaching and learning.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
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

A very large majority of parents and carers are very happy with their children's experience at school. Most agree that their children enjoy coming to school and are kept safe. They express strong confidence in the leadership of the school and most agree that they are kept informed about their children's progress. Most parents and carers are also very happy about the extent to which the school meets the particular needs of their children. Several parents and carers wrote about the substantial improvements made by the current school leaders and managers. As noted earlier in this report, a small minority of parents and carers expressed some anxieties about poor behaviour and bullying although some commented that this had improved recently. A few parents and carers felt that communication with the school could be improved and that their queries were not always properly dealt with.

Inspection evidence indicates that the school has improved recently, that students like the school and leadership is effective. The team concluded that behaviour has improved and that bullying is mostly dealt with effectively. Communication with parents has also improved through initiatives such as the monthly newsletter and better information to parents about students' progress and how they can assist in subjects such as English and mathematics.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sherburn 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 215 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 781 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	24	143	67	15	7	5	2
The school keeps my child safe	68	32	137	64	8	4	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	99	46	102	47	12	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	33	117	54	20	9	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	50	23	141	66	18	8	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	19	128	60	35	16	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	15	139	65	38	18	4	2
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)	49	23	136	63	12	6	5	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	26	133	62	20	9	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	25	122	57	24	11	8	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	20	131	61	22	10	9	4
The school is led and managed effectively	61	28	138	64	10	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	33	123	57	15	7	5	2

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.



1 April 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Sherburn High School, Leeds

It was very good to meet so many of you when we inspected your school on the 30-31 March 2011. My colleagues and I enjoyed our meetings and conversations with you. We found you very friendly and polite. You told us that most students enjoy school and behave well. You said that the school has improved a lot in the last couple of years and we agree with you. Most of you enjoy coming to school and consider the school to be caring. This was our view also. Some of you were concerned about poor behaviour although most students said that behaviour was good and had improved as a result of new rewards and sanctions. Some of your parents also mentioned behaviour as a concern and a few were worried about bullying. Behaviour was good when we visited and most of you said that bullying was dealt with well. Indeed, you all said how safe the school is.

The school is satisfactory and improving. The headteacher and his colleagues have made a big difference, as many of you told us. Standards are broadly average across the school and in the sixth form. Results in English and mathematics were below average last year. However, there were much better results in the GCSE English examinations in November 2010 and there is also evidence that progress in mathematics is getting better. Students enjoy lessons and are keen to do well. The quality of teaching varies across the school but is improving as a result of a lot of hard work and discussion by teachers. You respond enthusiastically when lessons are challenging and lively. We have asked the school to improve teaching further by: improving teachers' plans so that they are clear about how students will learn in lessons; and ensuring that all groups of students, including the more able students, are stretched. We have also said that the school needs to improve marking and feedback.

Once again, thank you for being so friendly and helpful during our visit to the school.

Yours faithfully

Philip Jarrett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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