

Shepshed High School

Forest Street, Shepshed, Loughborough, LE12 9DA

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils' achievement is not consistently good. Achievement is variable between year groups and in a number of subjects. Pupils are not making enough progress in English and mathematics, especially in Year 6.
- There is too much teaching which does not take sufficient account of the different needs and aptitudes of the pupils. Teachers do not consistently plan lessons which thoroughly challenge and motivate pupils to aim high.
- Pupils are not provided with consistent opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding for themselves through independent learning.
- In all subjects, teachers are not doing enough to develop the pupils' key skills, especially in reading and writing.
- Teachers' marking and assessment does not always provide pupils with sufficient guidance about how to improve their work.
- The school's leaders, including its governors, have only been partially successful in ensuring consistent and sustained improvements in the quality of teaching and the progress made by all groups of pupils.
- Information offered to parents and carers, especially through the school's website, requires improvement because it does not offer clear evaluations of how specific strategies are leading to rising standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs often do well because of the well-targeted and sensitive support they receive.
- The quality of pastoral care is at least good. Pupils feel very well supported and the quality of this provision helps to ensure a happy and harmonious school.
- Behaviour in classrooms and around the school's campus is invariably good. Pupils are polite, keen to help one another and their staff and visitors. They want to do well in their studies.
- The new senior leadership team has already set clear improvement goals and has succeeded in maintaining a high level of staff morale.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons involving 31 different staff. In addition, about a quarter of the lessons seen were jointly observed with senior staff members.
- A meeting was held with members of the governing body, including with the Chair. Meetings were held with two different pupil groups, and with many different members of staff, including the headteacher and senior and other leaders.
- Inspectors took account of 39 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The responses to 39 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' past and present work and scrutinised various documents. These included the school's checks on how well it is doing; planning; extensive information on pupils' academic progress; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Bill Stoneham, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This middle deemed secondary school is smaller than the average secondary school. It provides for pupils in Years 6 to 9.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority, or from other groups) is below average. At the time of the inspection there were no pupils from other groups and very few students were in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below, but close to the national average. The proportion who are at school action plus or who have statements is close to the national average.
- Most pupils are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both well below the national average.
- No pupils routinely receive any aspect of their education off-site. No pupils are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for pupils in Key Stage 2. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher commenced his position at the start of the current term. There have also been changes to the composition of the senior leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is at least good over time and increase the proportion which is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently use information about pupils' attainment to plan lessons which precisely meet their differing needs
 - developing teachers' skills in providing marking and written feedback to pupils so that it is clear what they have achieved and done well and how their work can be improved.
- Raise levels of achievement across all subjects and in all years, but especially in English and mathematics in Year 6, so that a greater proportion make and exceed expected levels of progress by:
 - seizing every opportunity to boost the pupils' skills in reading and in writing in an extended form and for different audiences
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently and research ideas and answers for themselves.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and governance by:
 - ensuring that robust procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are established
 - developing the skills of all senior leaders and governors so that they can check accurately whether the actions they are taking to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching and learning are having the desired impact
 - arranging for an external review of governance to be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.
- Improve the school's website to ensure that all the information that should be provided is available to and can be readily accessed by parents, carers and others.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils enter the school at the start of Year 6 with levels of attainment that are below those expected for their age.
- Achievement requires improvement because not enough pupils are making or exceeding their expected progress.
- Some improvements in outcomes are discernible and some groups are performing well. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, especially those with Asperger's Syndrome, make good progress from their starting points as a result of well-planned and targeted support. Good leadership of this aspect of the school's work ensures that the progress of these pupils is effectively tracked and analysed. This group of pupils is well supported by staff.
- Achievement in Years 7, 8 and 9, especially for higher attaining pupils, showed some improvement during the last academic year and outcomes based on teacher assessments are now closer to the national expectations, especially in English and mathematics. The achievements of Year 6 pupils and the progress they make in both English and mathematics is below the national averages and is lower than expected given their levels of prior attainment.
- The school uses additional funding made available through the pupil premium and Year 7 'catch-up' funding to target additional support, especially in literacy, to those who qualify. Such targeted support is leading to a rise in achievement, but the pace of the improvement mirrors the pace of improvement nationally. Thus, by the end of Year 9, the gap between the supported pupils and all pupils nationally remains at approximately half a level.
- Tracking arrangements at a whole-school level are detailed and enable senior staff to identify the performance of each pupil across the full range of subjects accurately. Pupils are aware of how well they are doing and they know their targets. Such information, however, is not being routinely used to challenge pupils' underperformance to ensure greater levels of progress.
- The school receives a small amount of money through the new primary school sport funding programme to support Year 6 pupils. Appropriate plans are in place to ensure that such funds are allocated appropriately but it is far too early in the academic year to evaluate the impact of this funding.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- There is far too much variation in the quality of teaching across all year groups and subjects. Though inspection evidence confirms the school's view that inadequate teaching is rare, few cases of outstanding practice are evident. The quality of learning and the quality of feedback pupils receive depends far too much on the individual qualities of the teacher.
- Over time, teaching is not consistently of a sufficiently high quality to ensure that all pupils make at least good progress. Opportunities for pupils to work independently and research knowledge, ideas and answers for themselves are rarely provided.
- Where teaching is most effective, at least good quality learning is fostered through activities that challenge, engage and excite the pupils. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils and independent work is successfully encouraged. Such high quality teaching was seen in a German lesson where pupils made rapid progress in their vocabulary development as a result of the

teacher's careful and thorough planning.

- In too many lessons there is an over-reliance on pupils completing worksheets. This restricts enterprise and far too frequently results in pupils giving short written answers using only simple sentences. This impedes the scope for pupils to gain higher levels. Not enough opportunities are given to pupils to develop their vocabulary and writing skills by writing in different forms and for different audiences.
- Assessment information is not used consistently to inform lesson planning. Lessons are frequently planned at one level and for the entire range of abilities in the class. Consequently, teachers aim work at middle-attaining pupils, meaning that the more able are insufficiently challenged, while lower attainers are insufficiently supported. This trait was a feature in some mathematics and science lessons in particular.
- Pupils who were heard to read often did so well and with confidence. In the lessons observed this important skill was not encouraged enough; in some cases, the only person heard to read was the class teacher.
- Marking is far too variable in quality. Often marking involves little more than a few ticks and some comments aimed to praise. What is lacking is detailed written feedback from teachers indicating clearly to the pupils what has been done well, what could be improved and how.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils want to learn and are keen to do well. Their behaviour around the school site and in lessons is invariably at least good. The only time standards slipped was when teaching was mundane and failed to challenge and inspire. On the very few occasions that less than good behaviour was witnessed in a lesson it was because the work was too simplistic and monotonous, and it failed to challenge and engage the pupils.
- In most lessons pupils wanted to learn, were keen and had very positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupil behaviour was especially good in those lessons where the planned work was challenging and engaging, and where independence was encouraged. Enjoyment was more evident in such lessons, with pupils helping one another, asking questions of another and asking their teachers sensible questions about the work in hand.
- Arrangements for pupil safety are secure. Pupils have an awareness of different forms of bullying and know about e-safety. They say that bullying in any form is rare and this claim is supported by the school's incident logs.
- On the very rare occasions that unacceptable behaviour does occur, pupils have faith in their staff to deal with the incident. Overall, those parents and carers who replied to the Ofsted questionnaire were happy with the quality of behaviour.
- Pupils feel part of a community. They value the school and the opportunities it offers and they believe that behaviour continues to improve.
- Attendance is on an upward trend and is broadly in line with national average figures. The school works well with its parents and carers to ensure that pupils attend regularly.
- The school offers students appropriate opportunities to seek responsibility and charity work is an important aspect of school life. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and discrimination is not tolerated. This commitment is characterised by the way a small number of

pupils with Asperger's Syndrome are successfully integrated into school. A small number of parents wrote directly to the lead inspector to praise the school's commitment to inclusion.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Self-evaluation is undertaken, though the present arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning and the progress made by different groups of pupils lacks precision. The newly appointed headteacher is fully aware that senior staff and the governors need to develop more robust procedures to ensure that the school's performance at many different levels is evaluated with greater rigour.
- The new headteacher has a clear vision about how the school's performance at many levels can be monitored and improved. At present school leaders, including the governing body, do not review outcomes sufficiently fully because actions taken are not set against clear and precise measures of success. It is thus difficult for them to show how they will have an impact on pupils' achievement or on improving the quality and consistency of teaching.
- The school meets all government requirements in relation to the safeguarding of pupils and safer recruitment. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils gain an awareness and respect for others and respond favourably to a range of sporting, artistic and cultural activities.
- Though there have been recent and significant changes in the composition of the school's senior team, staff morale remains high. The unanimous response to the inspection staff questionnaire was one of support, with some staff commenting on the high quality of the working atmosphere. Responses from parents and carers also indicated that the school is happy and harmonious, and capable of improving.
- With the appointment of a new headteacher, the working relationship between the school and the local authority is being reviewed. Hitherto, the support and challenge has been of value in improving some outcomes such as attendance and the progress pupils make in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Pupil Premium funding is being targeted into appropriate areas so that extra support is offered to some pupils, especially in terms of boosting their literacy skills. The achievement of this group has risen, but the pace has been such that the school is finding it hard to close the gap with all pupils nationally.
- Though parents feel well informed about the school's work, its current website is not easily negotiated and some of the information about the impact of how additional funds have been spent lacks clarity. Governors acknowledge the need to update and improve this facility.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide the school with a wide range of knowledge and expertise. They are committed to securing improvement and they are pleased with the progress that has recently be made in raising results, while acknowledging that more needs to be done. They have sought explanations from school leaders to show how achievement is rising and teaching improved, how staff performance is managed and teachers rewarded, and the impact of additional funding, such as the pupil premium. Despite this, their effectiveness has not been sufficiently effective because they have been too reliant on the information provided without consistently challenging the explanations offered and seeking to set more exacting targets.
 - Governors fulfil their statutory requirements well, including for safeguarding and staff recruitment. They are proud of their school and are passionate to help it improve further.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120257
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	425067

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	10–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	514
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Riggall
Headteacher	Matthew Parrott
Date of previous school inspection	February 2011
Telephone number	01509 502112
Fax number	01509 601113
Email address	office@shepshed-high.leics.sch.uk

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