

Sheredes School

Cock Lane, Hoddesdon, EN11 8JY

Inspection dates 1–2 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- The proportion of students that gain five A* to C passes at GCSE including English and mathematics has declined over a three year period.
- The progress rate varies too much for different groups of pupils. For example, the gap between students eligible for the pupil premium and their peers has not closed in mathematics.
- School leaders and governors have been ineffective at dealing with inadequate teaching in the past and this has led to a drop in standards.
- The promotion of literacy across the school is not seen by all teachers as their responsibility.
- Teaching is inadequate, resulting in students' underachievement in a number of key subjects over a three year period.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not make the same progress at A level as they do at AS level. Programmes of study do not prepare them fully for life beyond school.
- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students are polite and courteous around school, but they lack the necessary attitudes to learning to make good progress in their lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and governors have acted swiftly to address the inadequate teaching. They have recruited new teachers and an extensive programme of professional development is now in place to support and promote good teaching.
- New procedures have had an impact on behaviour, which is improving across the school.
- School staff, parents and students have expressed strong confidence in the current leadership of the school.
- Students feel safe in school and safeguarding procedures are effective. The school offers a curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 38 lessons, of which seven were in the sixth form, to observe behaviour and teaching.
- Eight observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspection team took into account 71 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and 51 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team met with governors, the local authority school improvement partner, senior and middle leaders and different groups of students, including those in the sixth form.
- The inspection team analysed and scrutinised the school's self-evaluation documentation, which included evidence from governors' minutes, school policies and progress information.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of students were examined by inspectors.

Inspection team

Pete Sewell, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
Lesley Daniel	Seconded Inspector
Paul Lawrence	Seconded Inspector
Sandra Teacher	Additional Inspector

Pete Sewell, Lesley Daniel and Paul Lawrence are appointed as Additional Inspectors, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Sheredes School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school with fewer girls than boys.
- The school population is mainly White British with a lower than average proportion of students from other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority) is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of students who have special educational needs is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- A very small minority of students attend vocational courses at the Hertfordshire Regional College and sixth form courses at St Mary's High School, Turnford.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The new headteacher initially joined the school in October 2013 as the interim head; a position that became permanent in April 2014. A national leader of education supports him and this support will continue throughout the current academic year.
- The school does not enter any students early for examinations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning across the school by:
 - rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching over time using a combination of lesson observations and work scrutiny to check that students are making good progress
 - using subject specific feedback to students about their work so they know how to make further progress.
- Improve the behaviour of students by:
 - using the school's consequences and rewards system to further develop students' positive attitudes to learning.
- Raise standards of achievement of students eligible for pupil premium funding by:
 - making sure that all teachers provide work which is appropriate to the needs of pupil premium students in their classes, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that the progress of these students is closely monitored and that the recording of achievement in different subjects is accurate
 - providing timely intervention when their learning slows and monitoring the impact of this intervention
 - undertaking an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors and school leaders robustly hold subject leaders and teachers to account for the progress of their students
 - monitoring closely the progress of students in modern foreign languages, mathematics and science and responding swiftly if standards are not rising

- ensuring that school policies with regard to marking, feedback and the promotion of literacy are being applied consistently across the school
 - conducting subject reviews across the school and implementing any recommendations swiftly to ensure standards rise across all areas of the school.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form by:
- ensuring that appropriate advice and guidance is given so that students embark on courses which are right for them
 - providing the necessary supervision and support for students who struggle to meet expectations
 - developing programmes of study that prepare sixth formers fully for life beyond school
 - ensuring that sixth-form teaching is consistently good.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Until recently governors and leaders have not been able to halt the decline in achievement. Since the arrival of the new headteacher assessment information for the current Year 10 and Year 11 indicate that this decline has halted.
- School leaders and governors have been aware of the gap between the performance of students supported by the pupil premium and their peers. They have taken steps to correct this, but these have come too late to impact on the progress of students that took their GCSE examinations in 2014.
- The new headteacher has energised the senior team and has brought in a range of new initiatives which have had a positive impact on behaviour and are improving the quality of teaching. He has acted swiftly to address areas of inadequate teaching and ensured that the school is fully staffed from September 2014.
- The school has a more realistic view of its own performance now than in the past. School leaders recognise where teaching is stronger and have put into place support where teaching is not yet good.
- Middle leaders are committed to raising standards and now understand the importance of holding teachers to account for the progress of the students they teach. There is considerable expertise amongst the middle leadership but they have lacked direction in the past. School leadership has put into place an extensive programme of professional development for teachers and middle leaders. Middle leaders speak confidently about the impact this training is having on the quality of teaching in their subject areas.
- The school community is supportive of the new headteacher and has confidence that the current school leadership will bring about the changes needed to raise standards. Recent improvements in student behaviour and a renewed focus on the quality of teaching have contributed to this confidence.
- Under the leadership of the new headteacher, the school has embarked on a series of subject reviews in the light of the 2014 results. The first reviews have already taken place and the outcomes are being used to raise standards, but it is too early to see any impact.
- The local authority and a national leader of education have given the current school leadership considerable support over the past year. This support has had an impact on the behaviour of students and is starting to raise the quality of teaching but came too late to impact on attainment.
- The school provides a curriculum which is broad and balanced and promotes British values through assemblies and tutor periods. The school has made arrangements to follow the new curriculum but its plans are not yet finalised, particularly in relation to assessment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - In the past the governing body has been ineffective at providing sufficient rigour and challenge for school leaders. This situation is changing. The recent appointment of new governors has increased the capacity of the governing body. Following training, they now understand their responsibilities with regard to monitoring the progress of groups of students including those eligible for the pupil premium.
 - There is evidence that governors now hold leaders to account for the progress of different groups of students, but they do not always pursue lines of enquiry with enough determination.
 - Governors monitor the quality of teaching closely and link the performance of teachers to their pay.
 - Governors have undergone a programme of extensive safeguarding training and monitor safeguarding, exclusions, attendance and child protection matters effectively. They ensure that the school meets statutory requirements and procedures for safeguarding are secure.
 - The governing body takes an active role in the life of the school and governor links are effective. They are keen to meet the needs of the students and the local community and are committed to providing post-16 provision which has a variety of pathways.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The recent impact of the behaviour policy with an emphasis on rewards and consequences has enabled teachers to focus more on teaching and learning. There is a significant drop in the number of 'on call' events within school where a member of the senior team has to respond to a behaviour incident.
- The school has used a new policy to address poor behaviour and these have resulted in increased rates of fixed term exclusions. This is seen as a necessary response to improve the environment for effective teaching to take place.
- Attitudes to learning are steadily improving but some students do not yet have the skills to enable them to make the most effective use of their time in lessons. In a small number of lessons some low-level disruption was observed and this impacted on the progress of some students in the class.
- Attendance rates have been below average, but the trend is improving.
- Students are polite and well-mannered. They are well presented and take a pride in their school. They have a healthy respect for the environment and for each other.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students are able to talk about how to keep themselves safe and understand not only what the different types of bullying are, but who to go to when they are worried or feel threatened. They have confidence that the school will respond to their concerns.
- Safeguarding procedures for students attending the Hertfordshire Regional College are good.
- Parents who responded to the online questionnaire also indicated that they feel the school is doing well at keeping their children safe and addressing issues of bullying.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strength of the school. This was observed during the inspection in a number of areas; students in Year 8 were reflecting on World War 1 through the use of poetry and in a Year 7 class, rewards were being given out for effort with spontaneous applause from the class.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Teaching over time has not allowed the students to make expected progress in a number of different subjects, particularly at Key Stage 4. It is particularly weak in modern foreign languages.
- The tasks set for students are often not challenging enough to enable them all to make good progress. Work is often directed at the middle ability students in the class with insufficient challenge for the most able students and those eligible for the pupil premium.
- Assessment of students' progress is often overly generous and the expectations of the teachers are not high enough for all students. In English books, students were rightly appreciated by teachers for good content but not enough attention was paid to technical accuracy.
- Marking and feedback is inconsistent across the school. It is school policy that books are regularly marked and that feedback is provided by teachers. Some books seen during inspection had not been marked regularly enough and feedback was often too vague and not subject specific. Consequently, students do

not always know how to improve their work and therefore good progress is not made.

- The promotion of literacy across the school is inconsistent. The literacy policy is led by the English department with training events for staff to raise the awareness of marking for accuracy. Some teachers still see this as for the responsibility of the English department rather than taking ownership themselves. Students' books show that not all teachers are correcting mistakes in students' written work
- The current leadership recognises that teaching is inadequate in some key subject areas and has already taken steps to address this. New staff have been recruited in mathematics, science and English and while improvements to teaching are promising it is too early to see the impact of this over time.
- There are areas of strength in teaching at Sheredes School. These were particularly noted in art, drama, media studies, business studies, computing and physical education. In these subjects, the teachers used skilful questioning to move learning forwards rapidly and plan to meet the needs of different groups within the class. As a consequence, all groups of students in these subjects make good progress.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs were observed being effectively supported by teaching assistants in a number of lessons. In a science lesson the teacher had considered both the academic and emotional needs of her students and used this to accelerate learning.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The achievement of pupils is inadequate because over time too many students have not made the expected progress across a wide range of subjects.
- The gap between the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and their peers in mathematics is not closing and remains too large. The gap is much smaller in English. In the 2014 GCSE examinations they attained two and a half grades below their school peers in mathematics and three quarters of a grade below in English. In the 2013 examinations the gap between students eligible for the pupil premium and all students nationally was over one full grade in English and half a grade in mathematics.
- Students did not make expected progress in the 2013 examinations in a range of subjects. Consequently, attainment in science was two thirds of a grade below national averages and in modern foreign languages and mathematics, half a grade below. In humanities students achieved nearly a full grade below the national average.
- School information indicates that students are now making better progress and are predicting that the gap between those eligible for the pupil premium and their peers will close significantly during this year. There are concerns about the accuracy of the school information but the evidence from books and lesson observations indicate that the decline in standards has been halted and is now rising.
- The school uses the Year 7 catch-up to provide targeted support using teaching assistants. There is evidence that this support is having an impact on progress.
- There is a gap in achievement between girls and boys within the school. The school has responded positively to this and strategies are now in place to narrow the gap. It is too early to assess the impact of this work but the students are very positive about the changes.
- The progress of students in Key Stage 3 is stronger than at Key Stage 4. Work scrutinies highlighted some issues with the accuracy of the assessments being used, but better progress was observed in both science and mathematics at Key Stage 3.
- The achievement of the most able students is similar to other able students nationally. The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is similar to other students and in some cases they are making better progress.

- Students that attend courses at the Herfordshire Regional College are making good progress and speak highly of the quality of teaching they receive.

The sixth form provision requires improvement

- Students do not make enough progress in some subjects at AS and A level.
- The achievement of students at AS levels and in vocational subjects is stronger than at A level. School leaders are not holding subject leaders and teachers to account for the low standards and progress of their students in some area.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement. Teaching does not always challenge students to think for themselves or to work through problems in order to deepen their understanding. The school has started to teach the skills necessary to prepare the students for higher education but it is too early to see the impact of this.
- The behaviour of students in the sixth form requires improvement. Students pay attention in lessons and are generally good role models for younger students around the school, but they have not yet developed the study skills and learning habits necessary to enable them to pursue their own learning. However, a new study base opened in September 2014 has already had an impact on their attitude to private study.
- A programme of study that prepares students for the next stage in their lives is not well enough established. Too much is left to be covered during tutor time. Sixth form students themselves identified topics that they would like to know more about, such as managing finance and the British political system. Whole days devoted to issues such as promoting sexual health are planned.
- Leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of an enthusiastic new head of sixth form who has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve achievement and the overall experience of students. Students now have dedicated study areas and are expected to use them when they are not in lessons.
- Students in the sixth form speak highly of their teachers. They are enthusiastic about their growing profile in the school, acting as mentors to younger students and supporting their learning through activities such as hearing them read. Students feel secure and understand how to keep themselves safe.

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	117538
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	442032

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	655
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	106
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Angela Page
Headteacher	Ced de la Croix
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2012
Telephone number	01992 410800
Fax number	01992 410801
Email address	admin@sheredes.herts.sch.uk

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