

# Shapwick School

Shapwick Manor, Shapwick, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA7 9NJ

## Inspection dates

23–25 September 2014

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

**4**

Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision	Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings

### This is an inadequate school because

- Leaders and managers do not ensure the safety of students at all times.
- Leaders and managers are not using the information available to check whether, and what, progress students, and groups of students, are making at the school.
- Leaders and managers do not adequately monitor the performance of all teachers and bring about improvement. They have failed to maintain the quality of education in the school.
- The quality of teaching is too variable and requires improvement.
- Students' progress, including in English and mathematics, which was outstanding at the last inspection, now requires improvement.
- The management of the sixth form requires improvement because students do not receive good enough support for their studies.
- The proprietors do not challenge senior leaders effectively and have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students behave very well in school. They are keen to learn and actively help one another to do so.
- Well-qualified and experienced therapists provide effective support to help students overcome the impact of their specific learning difficulties.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection considered the quality of the educational provision only at this residential special school. The most recent report of the school's residential provision, which took place in May 2014, is available on the Ofsted website.
- This inspection was carried out with a day's notice. The inspectors observed 14 lessons. One lesson was jointly observed with the school's interim headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at students' work and spoke to them about it. They held meetings with the proprietor, the interim headteacher, staff members and students.
- They looked at documentation, including policy statements, schemes of work, teachers' planning and records of students' progress and of staff training.
- The inspectors considered the responses of 78 parents who had completed Ofsted's Parent View on-line questionnaire. Twenty seven questionnaire responses from staff were taken into account, as were students' responses to the school's annual survey of students' views.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement for children looked after, those on free school meals and the most able pupils. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of support services.

## Inspection team

John Gush, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Angela Cook, Team inspector	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a specialist independent special school for day and residential pupils.
- The school was last inspected in December 2011 and the last inspection of the residential provision took place in May 2014.
- It operates on two sites, the preparatory school and the senior school, which are approximately five miles apart, near Bridgwater in Somerset.
- There are currently 143 pupils on roll from eight to 18 years of age. The preparatory school is the base for 34 boys and girls aged from eight to 13 years. Older students are based at the main school site in Shapwick. There are 80 male and female students in the age range 14 to 16 years and 29 in the sixth form. Sixth form students receive tutorial support from school staff, while all their course tuition is delivered through alternative provision at the local further education college.
- The 89 residential pupils are housed in five residential units on three sites.
- The main criterion for admission to the school is that pupils must have a diagnosis of dyslexia or other specific learning difficulty.
- Many different local authorities pay the fees of the 68 pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. Of these, 24 are placed by Somerset, the school's home local authority.
- The school is owned by Kedleston (UK), a company that manages other similar schools.
- An interim headteacher was appointed in September 2014, as the current headteacher, appointed in September 2013, has been unable to fulfil his duties due to illness.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that accurate information is provided to identify the progress that students, and groups of students, make from their starting points and that this information is used by teachers to help them plan more effective lessons which improve students' progress and achievements.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that teachers' performance is effectively monitored and evaluated so that they receive appropriate support to help them raise the quality of teaching and improve students' progress and achievements
  - improving the organisation of the sixth form and liaison with the local college
  - working with the proprietor to improve the rigour with which their performance is held to account
  - establishing a more effective working relationship with the local authority in order to benefit from their support, in particular with regard to the progress of groups of students, including the more able
  - improving the school's arrangements for students' safety as detailed below.
- **The school must meet the following independent school standards:**
  - ensure that there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, and that the information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 3(g))
  - ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
  - ensure that there is a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils which sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving, and that this policy is implemented effectively (paragraph 9)
  - ensure that there is a written policy which complies with relevant health and safety laws and that it is being implemented (paragraph 11)
  - ensure that there is a record of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour (paragraph 16)
  - ensure that there is an attendance register which is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17)
  - ensure that the proprietor has arranged for external lighting to be provided in order to make sure that people can safely enter and leave the school premises (paragraph 23E(b)).

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are inadequate

- The leadership and management of the school are inadequate because leaders and managers have failed to promote students' safety and welfare. The specific issues are outlined below in the section on behaviour and safety of students. In addition, adequate arrangements are not in place to make sure that students achieve as well as they can and that teachers and other staff have the best possible opportunities to help them to do so.
- The school's leaders have not provided an effective framework for teachers to track what students know and can do from their starting points at the school. As a result, they, and the teachers, do not know whether students are achieving nationally expected progress during their time at school and whether they are making the most of their abilities. Equally, they are not able to tell whether any group of students, for example those from deprived backgrounds, girls or the more able, are doing any better, or worse, than any other group. Consequently it is impossible for the staff to tailor the support they provide for any group or individual and so students do not receive the additional focus or assistance they need.
- The school's self-evaluation process takes account of a range of views from senior managers and accurately identifies some important areas of weakness. However, the self-evaluation is incomplete in that it does not lead to a related development plan and does not take account of the significant failings related to the safeguarding of students.
- The performance of some staff members is monitored and the lessons of some teachers are observed. However, the process is not managed rigorously and this means that some teachers are missed out. The information from monitoring is not analysed. Target setting for improvement is vague and the impact of any changes is not measured.
- Leadership of the sixth form is inadequate. The school has made no arrangements to monitor the progress or behaviour of sixth form students while they are at college or to evaluate the quality of the support they receive.
- Notwithstanding these findings, the school's leaders have valuable plans to make improvements. New arrangements to collect and analyse information about students' achievements have already been introduced and are currently being fine-tuned, as are those for monitoring and improving the quality of the teaching. The newly appointed interim headteacher has earned the confidence of the majority of staff members, who believe that he can bring improvements where they are needed. This comment from one sums up the view of many: 'The school is moving in the right direction after a long period of unsettled uncertainty.'
- The suitability of the staff to work with children is assured through effective safe recruitment practices, and an adequate central register of the checks made is maintained as required. However, the school has not verified the arrangements made to ensure the suitability of the staff at the further education college attended by the sixth form students.
- A suitable range of policies regarding fire safety and first aid are adequately implemented.
- A good range of premises, facilities and equipment promote learning at the school. However, external lighting to ensure that students can move between the school sites safely in the dark is not fully available.
- Although the large majority of parents are satisfied with their children's experience at the school, a small minority are dissatisfied with the way the school is run.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - provides insufficiently rigorous challenge to senior leaders, in particular in relation to students' safety, their achievements and the effectiveness of work of the teachers and other staff members
  - has not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

### The school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement for children looked after, those on free school meals and the most able pupils.

- The school does not ask for, and does not receive, any support services from the local authority for the education of identified groups of students. The local authority has very limited contact with the school and only occasionally attends the annual reviews of the 24 students it has placed at the school. The local authority has, over the past year, provided additional support for the school with regard to the management of safeguarding and child protection issues and with regard to ensuring that the school staff members are suitably trained in child protection. This has had a valuable impact on the school's performance and has helped the school to improve the manner in which it protects the students.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****are inadequate**

- Students' behaviour in school is good, which helps them to concentrate on their learning. The manner in which the school leaders promote the safety of students is inadequate. Five of the independent school standards that relate to their welfare, health and safety are not met.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and has received the required advanced level training in child protection. Although most staff members are also trained in child protection, the school cannot demonstrate that they have all received the requisite training.
- The school does not record adequately the way child protection cases are managed. Some cases that should be referred to children's social care have not been and records do not show how, or whether, these cases have been resolved.
- The way the school assesses risk to the safety of students is inadequate overall. Issues related to the security of students were drawn to the attention of the school leaders during the inspection and action was taken immediately to begin to address these. Risk assessments are carried out before students travel to sports fixtures or on educational trips. However, the recording of these is poorly managed as the paperwork is frequently not completed and risks are not evaluated. Because of this, the school cannot be sure that that students' safety is adequately promoted. In addition, risk assessments relating to individual students do not provide adequate information to enable staff members to ensure their safety.
- The school's behaviour policy is not implemented effectively because the school fails to record incidents of inappropriate behaviour or the sanctions that are imposed.
- The attendance register that is required for day students is not maintained accurately or in the manner prescribed in the independent school standards. In addition, the electronic attendance register that is used for day and residential students is not always accurately completed and does not always include the names of all students. Because of this, the school is not always able to account for the whereabouts of all students. This puts individual students at substantial risk, for instance in the event of a fire or of their being missing from school.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and is a strength of the school. Students are consistently courteous to staff members and to visitors and they support one another well if difficulties arise. Throughout the inspection, all the students observed in lessons showed a strong interest in the subject matter being taught and a clear desire to improve their knowledge and skills. They take an active part in the smooth running of the school day, fulfilling a number of valuable duties, including as anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Bullying is rare in the school and the very great majority of students say that they feel safe in school. The school makes strong efforts to ensure that students understand how bullying can happen and how it can be tackled. They learn how to keep themselves safe and about the potential dangers associated with the internet, social media and the inappropriate use of text messaging. However, they have less awareness of homophobic bullying.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students well. Students make good use of the opportunities that are available to develop their self-knowledge and self-confidence. Assemblies and lessons in religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE) provide a good range of information about their own and other cultures and promote tolerance and understanding between different sections of the community. Students are active fundraisers, supporting local and international causes. They learn about British values, including democracy and the rule of law. In one lesson observed, they were articulate in group discussions about the reasons for rules and fair decision-making.
- The school has a clearly stated policy that requires all staff members to ensure partisan political views are never promoted and that whenever political views are brought to the attention of students, they are presented in a balanced manner.

**The quality of teaching****requires improvement**

- The impact that teaching has on the learning and achievement of varies across the school and requires improvement. There is no consistent framework to assess students' work thoroughly and, because of this, the way teachers use information about what students know and can do when they plan their lessons requires improvement..
- English and mathematics are taught throughout the school and students have regular opportunities to expand their skills in speaking and listening. This makes a positive contribution to their progress in basic skills.

- Overall, however, the quality of the teaching is too variable, and school leaders do not do enough to challenge this and bring about improvement. Thus, some teachers use detailed awareness of students' capabilities together with expert knowledge of their subject to plan effective lessons that inspire students and promote their learning well. Effective questioning helps students in these lessons to develop their thinking skills. It challenges the more able and helps all students to make good progress. However, there are other lessons where planning is weaker and the teaching does not challenge the more able or support those who are struggling. Some less able students' books show that they have not grasped the lesson content and do not make good progress.
- Homework sessions are a regular part of the school day. Some students benefit from this because of clear direction from teachers about what they need to do. Others are confused because of recent changes in the organisation of these sessions. Some teachers do not set homework regularly, and this is not controlled by managers.
- A well-organised, well-resourced and efficient therapy department provides good support for students' specific learning difficulties. Therapists have good knowledge of students' capabilities and difficulties and they use this well in individual sessions with students and to support them in lessons. This helps students to overcome some of their difficulties and to make good progress.
- Teachers and therapists provide a positive climate for learning, which helps students receiving therapy to develop very positive attitudes to learning and make excellent progress in improving their behaviour in school.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The information held by the school to evaluate students' achievement is not well monitored or analysed by the school's leaders and managers. Students' abilities when they start at the school are not consistently recorded and the school does not know how well students achieve. Information gathered during the inspection suggests that, from their starting points, some students make nationally expected progress in many subjects, a few students do well in some, but the other students are underperforming.
- Students are taught a broad and balanced range of subjects throughout the preparatory and senior sections of the school. This includes all the National Curriculum subjects as well as religious education and PSHE. Students take GCSE examinations in English, mathematics and science and in a wide range of other subjects. Results from last year show that nearly half achieved five A\* to C grades across all subjects. Almost all passed mathematics, with about a quarter achieving grade C or above. In English, almost all passed but only one achieved a grade C or above. Overall, results, especially in English, require improvement. This is especially in view of the substantial number of students who achieved grade C or above in subjects that require writing skills, such as history and RE, but did not do so in English.
- Throughout the school, students read regularly. Many are confident and they show that they understand the texts they are given. Sometimes this is at a higher level of ability than their assessed grades suggest. They write frequently, for example diaries in the preparatory school and exam question responses in senior school history. This supports their development in literacy.
- Individuals benefit from support from the presence of language therapists in class. Some students receive targeted support, for instance with reading, by decoding (breaking the word down into sounds) unfamiliar words.
- More able students think hard and discuss difficult concepts when they are challenged by questions that stretch them. However, in too many lessons this does not take place. In a few lessons, students evaluate their own learning, which helps them to know what they need to do to improve.
- Less able students cannot always keep up with the lesson content being delivered. This leads to them being left behind, especially in mathematics, as the class moves forward to other topics.
- PSHE is taught throughout the preparatory and senior sections of the school. Students learn to look after themselves and to keep healthy. In these lessons, students are encouraged to work together, to express their views and to think about their impact on their own safety and wellbeing, as well as that of others.
- Some opportunities are provided for students to think about work opportunities, careers and their lives after school, but these are limited and inconsistent.
- Students benefit from regular and effective sports programmes. Many take part in team games with regular fixtures against other schools locally. This helps them to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem.

**The sixth form provision****requires improvement**

- All the courses followed by sixth form students take place at, and are provided by, the local further education college. College staff provide teaching and learning support at college and students spend the remainder of their time in the sixth form study room at school. The school's leadership of the sixth form is insufficiently rigorous because the school does not monitor the effectiveness of teaching nor the impact that the support offered at the college has on sixth form students' learning and achievement. College reports are sent directly to parents and are not copied to the school. Consequently, the school is unable to provide a suitable level of support or challenge to the students during the unstructured study time they spend at school.
- The school does not hold information concerning the achievements or progress of sixth form students, or groups of students. During the inspection, information was collated that showed that some students take courses that extend their level of achievement and that they make expected progress. Others continue at the level of their GCSE achievements while widening their experience into vocational subjects which suggests that they may not be suitably challenged. The information, advice and guidance students receive before entering the sixth form requires improvement.
- In addition to the learning support provided at college, students have access to support tutors at school during the time when they are not timetabled to be at college. These tutors provide continuity with school and support students with assignments and the theory elements of their courses. Therapists at school provide focused support to help students work with their specific learning difficulties. Students say that they value this support but some feel that they have too much unstructured time when they are not at college.
- The head of sixth form builds strong and useful relationships with teachers and managers at the college and is the main conduit for pastoral issues that arise at the college. However, arrangements to ensure that students' welfare is suitably promoted are insufficiently formalised.
- Sixth form students generally behave well both at school and at college. However, a substantial number of the incidents of inappropriate behaviour that the school does not record appropriately involve sixth form students.
- As with the other areas of the school, the local authority offers no formal support with regard to individuals or groups of students. Where learning support is provided in college, this is not charged to the school. One of the college managers commented that the school fulfils more the role of an interested parent than that of a professional partner.



## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053).



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123929
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SCO31481
<b>Inspection number</b>	446388
<b>DfE registration number</b>	933/6173

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential and day special school for students with specific learning difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 18 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	143
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	29
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	89
<b>Proprietor</b>	Kedleston Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Brosnen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Lee Adrian Wylie (interim headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–8 December 2011
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£17,892 to £18,729 depending on age
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£23,439 to £26,916 depending on age and nature of the residential arrangements
<b>Telephone number</b>	01458 210384
<b>Fax number</b>	01458 210111
<b>Email address</b>	office@shapwickschool.com

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