

The Sholing Technology College

Middle Road, Sholing, Southampton SO19 8PH

Inspection dates	17–18 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is ineffective because not all background checks on staff are verified or logged accurately.
- Senior leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of how they have led school improvements. Leaders do not evaluate their actions rigorously enough.
- Leaders are not taking the right actions because development planning is not sharply focused enough.
- Leaders judge the quality of teaching inaccurately because they do not take enough account of pupils' learning over time. Systems to judge teachers' performance are therefore compromised.
- Leaders and teachers have not done enough to address the endemic low-level disruption in lessons across the curriculum.
- Some pupils use unacceptable language to others. This type of behaviour sometimes goes unchallenged by staff.

- The overall progress made by pupils by the end of key stage 4 has been significantly below national averages in recent years. Their progress in science and modern foreign languages is particularly low. Although there are signs of improvements, they are happening too slowly.
- There is too much variability in pupils' progress. The most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disability do not make rapid enough progress. Leaders have not secured swift enough improvements in achievement.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. In some lessons, teachers' expectations are too low, so pupils' motivation and progress is limited.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent and often inaccurate.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils progress well in food technology, history and physical education; this is because of better teaching.
- Personal and health education is strong. This, together with a range of clubs and activities, provides pupils with valuable opportunities for personal development.
- Recent initiatives offer improved support to vulnerable pupils and their families. There are signs that the engagement and attendance of vulnerable pupils are improving as a result.
- Leaders' strong working relationships with local primary schools have improved pupils' transition arrangements from primary into secondary school.



Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of governance, leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the school's arrangements for maintaining a single central record meet statutory requirements
 - setting clear and consistent expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct
 - improving the accuracy of leaders' judgements of the school's performance
 - setting out in development plans specific targets and measurable milestones for what will be achieved at key points in the year, to enable senior leaders and governors to improve monitoring
 - ensuring that evaluations of the quality of teaching take into account its impact on pupils' learning over time
 - extending leaders' and governors' understanding of good and outstanding practice
 - ensuring that governors become skilled at using progress information to challenge senior leaders and hold them more effectively to account for the quality of teaching and achievement of all groups of pupils.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - plan challenging lessons that meet pupils' different needs
 - eliminate low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons
 - provide regular feedback to pupils on their work that gives them precise guidance on what to improve, in line with the school policy
 - use sharply focused interventions and skilful questioning to promote rapid progress of all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Accelerate the progress made by disadvantaged pupils (those who are eligible for additional government funding known as the pupil premium) and pupils who have special educational needs or disability by:
 - developing the expertise of teachers so that they can swiftly reduce the gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills
 - evaluating more thoroughly the impact of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding on pupils' learning
 - making sure that their attendance at least matches the average attendance of other pupils nationally.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Underachievement has become widespread in core areas of the curriculum. Standards of achievement and behaviour have fallen significantly since the last inspection and leaders have not delivered recommendations made at that time. Consequently, governors and leaders are not demonstrating the capacity to improve the school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are passionate about improving standards, but they do not have a sufficiently accurate interpretation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have not tackled specific aspects of its work that are in urgent need of improvement. Development planning identifies suitable priorities but only lists actions and those responsible for reviewing their completion. There is little detail of specific expectations in terms of improvements in outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is over-generous. They judged almost all teaching to be good or better despite pupils' progress by the end of key stage 4 having been significantly below national averages for the last two years. This is because their judgements are based on observations of teaching with insufficient emphasis on the impact that it has on pupil progress.
- This year, a number of new middle leadership appointments have been made and most heads of subject have changed. The team know that their role is to raise outcomes for pupils and they have good intentions. However, they have been focused on developing new schemes of work and systems of assessment and have not yet evaluated the effectiveness of these.
- Senior leaders and governors have struggled to recruit and retain high-quality staff to fill all vacant positions, for example in science. This has had a significant impact on standards of pupil behaviour and progress which have deteriorated since the previous inspection. Staff, pupils and parents all highlighted this as being a concern.
- Staff have received training on the school's new key stage 3 assessment and progress monitoring systems which were introduced in September 2015. However, this has not brought about strong improvement to the quality of teaching. Leaders have not been effective in implementing this new method of assessment as some staff and pupils are confused by the new system.
- Leaders' and governors' monitoring of the impact of interventions funded by the pupil premium lacks rigour, and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils are making less progress than their peers by the end of Year 11.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs or disability has experienced difficulties due to a period of staff turnover. This has impacted on the progress that this group has made. The senior leader acting as temporary leader of special educational needs has implemented a range of support and challenges for this group of pupils. However, classroom teachers too often fail to offer appropriate activities that meet these pupils' needs. Consequently, these pupils make less progress than their peers.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum offers a broad and balanced education together with a variety of after-school enrichment opportunities including sporting events, trips and visits. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is strong. For example, in a Year 9 religious studies lesson, pupils were inspired to reflect on and re-evaluate their views on people who have disabilities. Extended opportunity days, visits from inspirational outside speakers, peer mentor systems and the student leadership team provide pupils with opportunities for reflection and debate to develop their social skills. Pupils told inspectors that they particularly value their personal, social and health education lessons. As one Year 10 pupil explained, 'It's the one lesson where you know that you are going to learn something. It's about real life.'

■ The governance of the school

- The chair of the governing body has steadfastly supported the school even when faced with
 recruitment difficulties following the recent retirement of three long-standing governors. As a result,
 the governing body has not been able to offer sufficiently robust challenge to senior leaders to secure
 improvement. Recently, new governors have been recruited and are currently undergoing training to
 rectify this.
- Governors are well intentioned and want the best for the pupils, but they are too reliant on progress information provided by senior leaders which is inaccurate. Consequently, they lack a clear grasp of how well different groups of pupils are doing in the school and do not have reliable information by which to judge how well disadvantaged pupils are progressing. Therefore, they cannot evaluate how well the pupil premium grant is spent.



- Governors have not challenged the headteacher and other senior leaders strongly enough over their judgement that the quality of teaching is 'good', given the very poor GCSE achievement over recent years.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. This is because, at the time of the inspection, accurate records of the checks on the appointment of staff and other adults who work with pupils had not been systematically recorded in the single central record. However, the school does have some strengths in the wider aspects of safeguarding: child protection policies and procedures are clear, useful and up to date. The member of staff designated as safeguarding lead is trained as a trainer and works in other schools across the area. New systems ensure that any incidents are managed promptly and the local authority and other outside agencies are involved appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teachers' expectations are too low and pupils do not make enough progress, particularly in key stage 3. Teachers' ambition for what pupils can achieve is too low, particularly for the most able pupils, and the work they are given is too easy. For example, in science, pupils are rarely challenged to produce their own explanations and conclusions from their experiences of practical work. In mathematics, there are too few occasions when pupils are challenged through problem-solving.
- The needs of the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disability are not met. Weak assessment and monitoring of progress in a range of subjects and across year groups means that teachers do not plan lessons that are challenging enough, or well suited to pupils' needs. As a result, these groups make slow progress.
- Pupils do not take pride in the work in their books. Their work is often messy and teachers do not enforce high expectations of presentation. Too often, work is allowed to remain unfinished.
- The school's preferred approach to giving pupils feedback is not applied consistently by teachers. In art, history, food technology and health and social care, teachers have good relationships with pupils and give detailed feedback which pupils use to make improvements to their work. Consequently, engagement and achievement is much higher in these subjects than elsewhere. Pupils' books show that effective feedback is patchy in other subjects and rare in science.
- Teaching in English is stronger in key stage 4 than in key stage 3, where much work is presented chaotically. Across the curriculum, pupils are given too few opportunities to practise their core literacy skills and this is one reason why their progress is held back. In key stage 4 English, and in history, the level of challenge is higher: pupils produce their own extended pieces of writing and make better progress.
- Teaching in mathematics gives pupils the opportunity to learn standard techniques and skills but teachers are not ensuring that pupils have mastery of these in key stage 3. For example, in a Year 9 lesson using number boards, pupils did not know their times tables or recognise when an answer was wrong. Pupils' mathematics books show a lack of challenge over time and that pupils' skills of mathematical reasoning and problem solving are underdeveloped.
- Teachers do not promote resilience or encourage pupils to think for themselves. In many lessons, pupils rely too heavily on their teachers for answers rather than having a go themselves. Not all teachers use sufficiently probing and challenging questioning to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. This means that pupils too often give oral answers that lack enough depth or detail and they fall behind.
- Parents expressed their concern regarding the quality of teaching. Nearly half of the parents who expressed an opinion on Parent View disagreed that their child was taught well at the school, and just over half would not recommend the school to another parent. Pupils value the good relationships that they have with some teachers, but several reported their concerns about the quality of teaching in science, modern foreign languages and religious studies.



Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Attendance, although improving, is currently below the national average and has been for the last few years. School records clearly show that a pattern of decreasing attendance, as pupils move from Years 7 to 11, has been evident for some time. The average attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs remains well below their peers.
- The welfare needs of pupils are not being fully met. Some pupils told inspectors that they were unhappy with behaviours that they found unacceptable, such as the use of homophobic language and racism, which were not challenged by staff. One third of parents responding to Parent View indicated that they felt that the school did not deal effectively with bullying.
- The work of the pastoral teams has recently improved and they provide caring and supportive pastoral guidance for pupils. Many of the processes and policies used by the pastoral team are new and leaders acknowledge that, while they have started to improve behaviour, there is still much work to do.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision benefit from their experience of a broader and more vocational curriculum. Their progress and welfare is overseen by a nominated member of staff who liaises frequently with the other providers.
- At key stage 4, all pupils engage in appropriate work experience and receive good next steps guidance for their chosen careers or future study.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- A culture of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour from pupils has not been promoted well enough by leaders. Too many pupils do not have good attitudes or show respect for learning. Low-level disruption to learning in lessons occurs commonly across most areas of the curriculum. Pupils, parents and staff all expressed concern about the level of disruption caused to learning.
- The school's behaviour records are inadequate as they fail to record racist and homophobic bullying. Consequently, staff cannot adequately track and challenge perpetrators, nor support victims.
- During transitions between lessons, at break and lunchtimes, there were some incidents of pupils using inappropriate language which indicated a lack of respect. This behaviour was not always challenged by staff. Nevertheless, the vast majority of pupils are polite to visitors and greet adults appropriately.
- In the past, exclusions have been above the national average and disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability have had higher exclusion rates than their peers. Leaders have implemented systems to address this and overall the number of exclusions has decreased this year.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Pupils enter the school with prior attainment that is broadly average. The proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has declined for the last three years. In 2015, this figure was significantly below the national average and represented inadequate progress for these pupils. Last year, pupils underperformed in English, science, modern foreign languages and humanities.
- Current progress information indicates the overall progress being made by Year 11 in English and mathematics is much stronger, and the proportion of pupils set to achieve at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, will rise significantly. However, there are very wide gaps in the achievement made by disadvantaged pupils compared to their peers.
- Outcomes in science are inadequate. Pupils do not make strong or rapid enough progress.
- Leaders have developed new assessment systems for key stage 3. They presented information that indicates overall progress improved across the curriculum and gaps in the achievement made by different groups were closing. Inspectors found that this is not the case when scrutinising pupils' books. Too few pupils in key stage 3 make secure progress in English, mathematics or science.
- Very few of the most able pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders' and teachers' expectations are not high enough.



- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is cited as improving by leaders. However, too few teachers routinely plan learning activities which meet their needs. The provision does not help them make enough progress.
- Outcomes are weak in many subject areas. Not all teachers check pupils' learning regularly enough to provide effective support and guidance for any who lag behind. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work indicates variable rates of progress, and a variable quality of work over time being produced in different subject areas.
- Senior leaders have rightly identified improving pupils' literacy as a key priority and effective use is made of the Year 7 catch-up premium funding. Independent reading is promoted through weekly timetabled sessions, but off-task behaviour means that the impact of this for many pupils is limited.



School details

Unique reference number 116451

Local authoritySouthamptonInspection number10000749

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school Secondary

School category Community

Age range of pupils 11–16

Gender of pupils Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll 1,017

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair James Kimpton

Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge Martin Brown

Telephone number 02380 448861

Website www.sholingtc.org.uk

Email address info@sholingtc.org.uk

Date of previous inspection 5–6 October 2011

Information about this school

- The Sholing Technology College is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children looked after and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Some pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- A small number of pupils in key stage 4 attend alternative provision either to study vocational courses or for medical reasons.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is very low.
- Just over one tenth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority are White British. Most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.



Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in 33 lessons in order to gather evidence to contribute to inspectors' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In addition, walks around the school were conducted jointly with members of the school leadership team to observe what the school provides and pupils' learning. Inspectors also attended tutor periods, visited the library and observed pupils' conduct around the site at break and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, senior leaders, teachers, support staff and several groups of pupils. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation including that relating to: policies; records of governors' meetings; strategic planning documents; safety; self-evaluation documents; pupil achievement; behaviour and attendance information and a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in: 79 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View; 37 staff questionnaires; and 104 pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector Her Majesty's Inspector

Alistair Brien
Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Doherty
Ofsted Inspector
Ofsted Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

Richard Kearsey

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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