

Shapwick School

Shapwick Holdings, Shapwick Manor, 21 Station Road, Shapwick, Somerset TA7 9NJ

Inspection dates

6–8 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Changes to the ownership of the school and to the staff team since the previous inspection have impacted adversely on the school's capacity to improve quickly.
- Leaders have not ensured that all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been tackled with sufficient urgency and rigour.
- Leaders' plans to drive improvement lack precise and measurable targets to enable the advisory body to check that the school's actions are improving pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the school and across a range of subjects. Some teachers do not demand enough of pupils, particularly the most able, to ensure that they make consistently good progress and know how to improve their work.
- Not all staff use the school's assessment systems effectively to check pupils' learning and progress. As a result, work is not always well planned to meet pupils' differing needs.
- The quality of writing is inconsistent across the curriculum. Staff do not routinely share best practice in the school or evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Until recently, the school has lacked experienced leaders to raise standards in subjects across the curriculum. In addition, staff are not fully involved in leaders' plans to improve the school.
- Not all staff have received training to enable them to de-escalate behaviour incidents or to recognise possible signs of risk to pupils.
- Some risks identified in the most recent audit have not been fully resolved.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Their actions are beginning to have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Teaching in the primary phase is effective.
- Leaders ensure that students in the sixth form benefit from effective provision at high-performing local colleges. They achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. They are polite, courteous and respectful to each other.
- Pupils' photography work is of a high standard.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools (if RSS)

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (the 'independent school standards') and associated requirements.
- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to enable a greater proportion of pupils to make at least good progress and achieve well, by ensuring that:
 - staff have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - teachers share their knowledge and skills of teaching English to improve the quality of writing in other subjects across the curriculum
 - teachers use the school's recently introduced assessment systems and the information they collect about pupils' learning and progress to plan tasks which support pupils to learn effectively
 - leaders check that the most able pupils are appropriately challenged to extend their thinking and learning
 - teachers check the impact of planned interventions more effectively
 - pupils' individual learning targets are precise, measurable and achievable
 - the school's feedback policy is effectively and consistently implemented so that pupils know what to do to improve their work
 - staff receive training to develop the quality of their teaching.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders, and especially subject leaders, receive the training they need to be able to evaluate sharply the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and achievement
 - actions to improve the school include precise and measurable success criteria to enable the advisory body to rigorously check that leaders' actions are making a difference to the school's performance
 - leaders closely monitor the achievement of the most able pupils and those receiving intervention to speed their learning and progress
 - leaders and members of the advisory body strengthen communication with staff to include them more fully in the plans to improve the school
 - staff who are new to the school and residential provision receive the training they need to be able to identify pupils at risk of harm and to be able to de-escalate any incidents of challenging behaviour.
- Ensure that there is greater rigour and depth in all risk assessments relating to the school environment, including the residential provision. In particular, take action within a timely manner in response to the most recent externally commissioned risk assessment. In addition, ensure that target dates are set to meet the shortfalls identified.
- Ensure that records relating to fire management, and in particular fire drills, record in full the names of all people involved in the drill. In addition, ensure that health and safety records clearly demonstrate the actions taken to address any deficiencies identified during fire drills.
- Ensure that all staff receive training to recognise and manage incidents of challenging behaviour, including methods to de-escalate such events.

- The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:
 - The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. (NMS 13.4)
 - Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school. (NMS 19.1)
 - All existing care staff have attained a relevant minimum level 3 qualification or have qualifications which demonstrate the same competencies. All new staff engaged from the commencement of these standards hold these qualifications or begin working towards them within 3 months of confirmation of employment. (NMS 19.2)
 - The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate consultation. Where applicable the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans. (NMS 21.1)

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision

Requires improvement

How well children and young people are helped and protected in the residential provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that the independent school standards are met. However, leaders are not yet able to demonstrate that teaching is consistently good. In addition, staff do not always implement the actions taken by leaders with the rigour and consistency required. As a result, the school is not yet good. In addition, the proprietor and senior leadership team have not ensured that all of the minimum standards for residential special schools have been met.
- Leaders have not fully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The uncertainty surrounding the possible closure of the school and the changes of staff have slowed the pace of improvement. The new proprietor has secured the long-term future of the school. As a result, the school is now well placed to improve quickly.
- Until recently, leadership capacity has not been strong enough to implement planned improvements. For example, the school has lacked experienced subject leaders to support the headteacher to improve the school. Too much has rested on the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the curriculum. School improvement planning focuses on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and safeguarding pupils. However, plans lack precise and measurable targets, with recorded criteria for success, making it difficult for the advisory body to evaluate and measure the actions taken. This lack of precise analysis has slowed the pace of improvement.
- Leaders have increased their expectations of teachers to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers' performance management is now securely linked to ensuring that teaching improves and pupils make consistently good progress. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
- The teaching team has changed significantly since the previous inspection. Some staff, especially those new to the school, lack the training and guidance they need to deliver consistently high-quality teaching. A few members of staff report that they would benefit from increased communication with leaders to support them to improve their work.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching frequently. However, the headteacher carries too much responsibility for this work. Feedback given to staff following monitoring checks lacks the precision and focus required to improve teaching quickly.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) checks the learning and progress of each pupil. Leaders plan interventions when the SENCo and staff identify gaps in learning or when progress slows. However, the school's agreed target-setting system lacks precise and measurable learning outcomes. Also, leaders and teachers do not analyse the impact of planned interventions with sufficient rigour.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils to experience a full range of subjects. For example, pupils in the primary phase take part in trips and visits to enrich their learning in history and English. In addition, pupils have further opportunities to take part in a wide range of sporting activities during school time and after school. They compete against local schools successfully and benefit from trampolining and golf as part of the after-school activities programme.
- The personal, social and health education programme supports pupils effectively to lead healthy lifestyles and increases their awareness of the risks they may face. These include those associated with alcohol and drugs. Pupils learn to be respectful and tolerant of others. They are very accepting of the views and cultures of their friends who attend the school from around the country and the world. They speak with great maturity and respect and are unfailingly polite and well mannered. The school's ethos is inclusive and caring. As a result, pupils say they love being at the school and feel safe and well cared for. Most parents agree with this view.
- Leaders provide detailed and regular reports to parents and placing local authorities. These reports provide information about pupils' academic and personal development. Most parents appreciate the information they receive to enable them to engage in their child's education, especially parents of pupils in the residential accommodation.

Governance

- The advisory body was set up following the change in ownership of the school in September 2016. Since this time, the pace of improvement has accelerated. Nonetheless, over time, school leaders have not tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection with sufficient urgency and rigour. As a result of a period of instability and change in ownership, the school's work has lost momentum and therefore it is not yet consistently good.
- The advisory body has strengthened the quality of governance. Members bring a range of appropriate skills and experience to the school. They have focused on ensuring that the school's policies and procedures to safeguard pupils are in place and being implemented effectively. In addition, they have supported leaders to work with staff to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Together with the headteacher and directors, they have an accurate understanding of where teaching is strongest and where improvement is still needed. They have not shied away from taking difficult decisions to strengthen the teaching and staff team. The school's capacity to improve has strengthened.
- The proprietor has provided much-needed financial security to ensure the school's long-term future. The directors have begun to implement ambitious plans to improve the fabric of the buildings on the school sites and to renovate the quality of the classrooms. The quality of the school premises has improved significantly during this academic year.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet requirements. Leaders have ensured that policies and procedures are up to date and keep pupils safe. The estate manager and safeguarding governor on the advisory body have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of the school's systems during this academic year. As a result, pupils are safe and say they feel safe.

- All staff have received training in child protection and the school's 'Prevent' duty. They know what to do if they identify concerns. Record-keeping is of a high quality. Leaders have established positive relationships with the local authority and with other placing local authorities. However, staff new to the school and residential settings have not yet received further training to support them in identifying pupils at risk of child sexual exploitation or female genital mutilation. In addition, some staff have not completed training in the management of behaviours and de-escalation strategies.
- Leaders recruit staff safely. References are taken up and verified. In addition, leaders ensure that fire safety precautions are well established and fire drills are carried out each term and recorded. However, some records relating to fire drills do not record in full the names of all people involved.
- Leaders check the health and safety of the premises routinely and engage the expertise of an external adviser for further checks. Risk assessments identify potential hazards and supervision arrangements to keep pupils safe when moving between sites. Following advice, the risk assessment relating to the school environment has been strengthened further to take account of all identified hazards. However, some actions to ensure pupils' welfare remain outstanding following an external audit. In addition, leaders' action plans do not record target dates by which the advisory body can check that all identified hazards have been resolved.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good throughout the school. There is variability across the age ranges and subjects in pupils' learning and the outcomes they achieve.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced systems to assess and monitor pupils' learning and achievement. However, teachers are not using the information they keep about pupils' progress consistently to plan work which specifically meets their needs. As a result, teachers do not always expect enough of their pupils, especially the most able. They accept work which is not of a high enough standard.
- Work in pupils' books confirms that they are sometimes unsure how to improve their work. Misconceptions remain unchallenged and this slows pupils' progress.
- Strengths are evident, particularly in the primary phase and in the teaching of English, mathematics and photography. The school supports pupils to overcome their specific reading and spelling difficulties from low starting points. This helps them to build their knowledge, skills and confidence to write at length in their English work. However, work in pupils' books confirms that the quality of writing in some other subjects across the curriculum is less well developed.
- Teachers question pupils effectively. Staff have received training to support this aspect of their work. For example, pupils in Year 9 discussed the forthcoming general election with maturity and understanding. They were given time to explore current political issues and test out their understanding. However, on occasion, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge to stretch pupils' thinking and check their understanding. In key stage 4, pupils benefit from teachers' specific subject knowledge. This enables them to study for external accreditation such as GCSEs. Pupils receive independent advice and guidance to help

them prepare successfully for the next stage of their education. They continue to benefit from effective teaching in English in Years 10 and 11. However, teachers have lacked advice from subject leaders to support them in improving their teaching.

- Well-trained therapists provide targeted support to help pupils learn successfully. This includes personalised sessions provided by experienced speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. This work complements that of teachers and successfully supports pupils' academic and personal development.
- Staff are committed to help pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils receive challenges to help them overcome their reluctance to read. House parents support the school's work and encourage pupils to read in the evenings. As a result, pupils' skills and willingness to read improve over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Staff new to the school and residential settings have not yet received training to enable them to identify possible harm or risk. In addition, they have not been trained in the management of behaviours, including methods to de-escalate any incidents of more challenging behaviour. As a result, some staff do not have sufficient knowledge to be able to ensure pupils' welfare and safety.
- Leaders have implemented a comprehensive written health and safety policy to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Risk assessments take account of the school's ethos to develop pupils' independence. This work is balanced with a focus to keep pupils safe. However, some weaknesses identified at the school's annual health and safety audit last month have not yet been addressed by leaders with recorded dates for completion.
- Pupils say they feel safe and trust adults to keep them safe. In particular, they are very knowledgeable about keeping safe on the internet. Older pupils explained the steps they take to lead healthy lifestyles. The work of the school and residential staff is effective in ensuring that pupils develop into healthy, confident and articulate young people.
- Throughout the inspection, pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school. As a result, attendance is good. Records confirm that pupils are rarely absent.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good in the school and residential provision. Pupils are polite and courteous and understand that derogatory language will not be accepted.
- In lessons, pupils behave well and listen attentively. They take turns to speak and address all teachers with respect. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong across the school. Pupils say they like the calm atmosphere; one remarked 'it helps me to learn well'.
- Bullying is rare and not tolerated. Any incidents are recorded fully and followed up with those involved. This work supports pupils effectively to feel safe and secure.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are typically strong. They want to achieve well and enjoy their learning. However, on occasion when teaching does not challenge or inspire them to think deeply, they lack motivation and learning is less effective.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement and progress are variable across subjects and age ranges. Not all teachers implement the school's agreed approaches to assessment, target setting and feedback effectively. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school.
- Pupils join the school unable to read and write at the standard expected for their age. Most have not had positive experiences at their previous schools and lack self-confidence. Pupils settle quickly at Shapwick. They benefit from the personalised support they receive from therapists, care staff and the teaching team. They begin to achieve and make progress from their low starting points.
- The quality of writing and recording is variable. In English, pupils learn to use paragraphs consistently and apply their knowledge of punctuation and spelling with increasing confidence. This is evident in their workbooks but is less apparent in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils in Year 11 achieve a range of external accreditation. In 2016, just under half of the Year 11 class achieved five or more GCSE qualifications at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. However, GCSE outcomes are too variable across subjects.
- Outcomes in creative subjects such as photography are strong. Pupils showed their work to inspectors with real pride. The quality of the completed pieces of work in this subject and the high standard of presentation confirm pupils are on track to achieve GCSE accreditation.
- Pupils in the primary phase join the school with very low starting points. They benefit from effective teaching and personal support which enables them to begin to make progress, especially in reading, spelling and writing. Work in their books confirms that pupils begin to use punctuation accurately and over time learn to write in full sentences. They use increasingly descriptive vocabulary in a range of styles of writing such as report writing and written accounts of recent trips and visits to places of interest.
- Leaders and staff do not specifically identify and track the most able pupils in their analysis of pupils' progress. However, the SENCo provides reading texts at an age-appropriate level to ensure pupils develop a willingness to read for pleasure. As a result, pupils build their skills and learn to read. In particular, their comprehension of the texts they read develops effectively.
- Pupils take part in weekly organised sports lessons and learn a range of new skills. Some gain accreditation in physical education. They achieve a GCSE qualification to equip them to move on to courses in the sixth form to further their skills and interest in this subject.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Leaders have chosen their sixth form providers wisely and developed strong partnerships with high-performing colleges. Students benefit from attending outstanding provision in the local towns. They have access to a wide range of well-organised and high-quality courses to further their education and learning. Leaders ensure that students who choose to stay at Shapwick to continue their education also access options and provision to suit their abilities and aspirations. Students make at least good progress during their time in the sixth form. As a result, provision in the sixth form is good.
- Students make good progress in a range of academic courses, including A levels, GCSEs and vocational options to suit students' career aspirations. These include engineering, agriculture and media studies. All students receive support to achieve accreditation in mathematics and English.
- The progress of the most able is particularly strong. Pupils achieve strong A-level outcomes at their chosen college.
- Leadership of the sixth form is effective. Leaders review the service level agreement between the school and colleges. In addition, college leaders liaise regularly with college tutors to check students' academic progress and their welfare. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive careers guidance to help them choose the most appropriate course to meet their aspirations and abilities. However, school leaders do not analyse the progress of groups, such as the most able, in sufficient depth across the range of subjects that students study.
- Students say they feel safe at college and at the school. They enjoy their courses and, as a result, their behaviour and attendance are good. However, a small minority stated that they had concerns that the school's tutor system is not as effective as they would wish.
- Students in the sixth form complete their education and the vast majority transfer into appropriate education, employment or training. This includes university placements, apprenticeships and training courses. The school organises work experience to enable students to make the right decisions regarding their future. Last year, nearly all students entered further education, employment or training.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not provided all staff with the appropriate training to equip them with the skills they require to meet the present and changing needs of the pupils. This includes protecting children from child sexual exploitation, understanding attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Asperger syndrome, mental health awareness and female genital mutilation awareness. In addition, not all staff have attained a relevant minimum level three qualification.
- Not all pupils' placement plans provide staff with clear guidance about how their day-to-day care and support needs are to be met. In addition, some plans do not contain measurable targets to demonstrate improved outcomes for pupils, and some targets have not been regularly reviewed.

- Records relating to accidents do not consistently demonstrate a robust audit trail of the actions taken, outcomes of any medical intervention, reporting to parents and management oversight.
- Pupils say they would like greater opportunities to develop their independent living skills. They told inspectors they would like to be able to attend to their own laundry, and develop their cooking and budgeting skills. The inspectors agree that this would provide them with opportunities to develop skills for their adult life.
- The head of care is experienced, knowledgeable and qualified to undertake this role. He demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the pupils' needs. He is committed to improving the experience and quality of their residential experience. There have not been any recorded complaints since the last inspection.
- House parents spoken to confirm that leaders provide them with support and guidance to undertake their role. They want the best for the pupils and promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Residential staff support pupils with their learning in the evenings and provide support to complete homework. In discussion, older pupils told inspectors which careers they wanted to pursue and why.
- Medication is managed safely and staff promote pupils' health and well-being effectively.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in their residential provision; they are confident to speak with house parents if they have any concerns or worries. Pupils say, 'house parents go above and beyond for anything we want. They keep us safe and reassured.' Pupils are provided with good opportunities to talk with staff and others. The independent listener visits regularly and pupils are aware of how to contact them if needed.
- Pupils enjoy the weekend and evening activities. They say they have plenty of time to relax and socialise with their friends.
- Most pupils are positive about the quality and quantity of the meals provided. Those pupils with dietary needs are extremely well provided for.
- Leaders address concerns related to the welfare of pupils without delay. Comprehensive safeguarding records are maintained that demonstrate a detailed audit trail, and record the outcome of the concern. Since the previous inspection there have not been any referrals made to the designated officer or to children's services.
- Restraint is not used. However, not all staff have received training in behaviour management and de-escalation. Sanctions are not often used; those that are given are fair and proportionate.

School details

Unique reference number	123929
Social care unique reference number	SC031481
DfE registration number	933/6173
Inspection number	10034720

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	26
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	49
Proprietor	Shapwick Holdings Limited
Principal	Adrian Wylie
Headteacher	Helen Lush
Termly fees (day pupils)	£6,173 to £6,462
Termly fees (boarders)	£8,520 to £9,286
Telephone number	01458 210384
Website	www.shapwickschool.com
Email address	office@shapwickschool.com
Date of previous inspection	23–25 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is a specialist independent special school for day and residential pupils with dyslexia and dyspraxia.
- The school's ownership changed in June 2016. The school is now owned by Shapwick Holdings Limited.
- The school received its previous standard inspection in September 2014 and was found to be inadequate.
- The last inspection of the residential provision took place in February 2017 and found the overall experiences of the pupils to be good.
- The school received an unannounced integrated progress monitoring inspection of education and residential provision in February 2015. Some independent school standards were found to be unmet. The subsequent progress monitoring inspection in June 2015 found all standards were met.
- The school operates in and around the Shapwick school site. The site being used at the previous inspection has been closed.
- There are currently 83 pupils on roll from eight to 19 years of age. Sixth form students receive tutorial support from school staff, while all their course tuition is delivered through alternative provision at Bridgwater College and Strode College.
- The 49 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 pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education, to be integrated with an inspection of the residential provision.
- The education inspectors visited classrooms during the inspection to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, in the residential provision in the evenings, at break and lunchtimes and during lessons. Inspectors talked with pupils and staff throughout the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the principal by telephone, the directors by telephone, the headteacher, the head of care, other leaders and staff. Inspectors met with parents and pupils to seek their views about the school and to hear pupils read. In addition, inspectors met with leaders responsible for welfare and boarding, and boarding staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the school's plans for improvement and information about pupils' achievement. The education inspectors also looked in detail at pupils' work in a range of subjects and year groups during lessons and during a formal scrutiny of work.
- The lead inspector analysed 46 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 34 text message responses received from parents during the inspection. In addition, 32 responses to the staff questionnaire and 45 responses from pupils were analysed.
- The Department for Education commissioned the inspection at this time to take account of complaints made about the school.
- The principal and head of sixth form were abroad on school business at the time of the inspection and therefore not in school. The inspectors met with the headteacher and head of care throughout the inspection to discuss and feed back their findings.

Inspection team

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