

Sheiling School

Horton Road, Ashley, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 2EB

Inspection dates

28–30 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school continues to meet all regulatory requirements of the independent school standards.
- Leaders demonstrate drive, determination and aspiration to continue to improve the school further.
- Staff share the high aspirations of leaders and are unrelenting in their quest to provide pupils with the very best learning and therapeutic experiences.
- Staff are vigilant in all aspects of pupil welfare and safeguard pupils effectively.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are impressive. Staff forge a warm and supportive environment which enables pupils to feel safe and secure.
- Behaviour of pupils is good. Staff understand pupils' needs extremely well and manage their complex and anxious behaviours with skill.
- Teaching is good. Pupils typically make good progress from often extremely low starting points. However, some pupils, especially the most able, are not yet reaching their full academic potential.
- Teachers are ably supported by teaching assistants who support pupils well in their learning.
- The curriculum is rich and varied, which motivates pupils to learn. They enjoy taking full advantage of the exciting experiences on offer. These are further enhanced by visits and clubs.
- Sixth-form provision is good. Students make good progress as a result of good teaching. Consequently, all students secure places in education, training or employment when they leave.
- Parents are positive about the school. They welcome the high-quality care and education their children receive.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. However, plans for improvement lack precise arrangements for how and by whom actions will be checked to ensure that they make a difference to the achievement and progress of pupils.
- Middle leaders are not yet involved in the school's improvement work sufficiently. Consequently, this limits their ability to drive forward improvements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - school development plans are more helpful to leaders and trustees in checking whether the actions taken have had the desired effect and identifying leaders to hold to account for continued improvement
 - middle leaders have increased opportunity to monitor and develop the quality of teaching and learning so they know what works well, and why.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further to enable pupils to fulfil their academic potential, especially for the most able.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have ensured that the school continues to meet all of the independent school standards. Leaders are highly reflective and united in their ambition to provide pupils with the best possible care and education. They work tirelessly to make sure pupils are successful and well prepared for their futures. Indeed, parents describe the school as 'a truly amazing and very special school' and 'a truly child-centred and individualised school'.
- Leaders are ably supported by a committed and skilful staff, who share their vision. They welcome the school's ethos, training and guidance to improve their practice. 'I am very happy and proud to work here' and 'a wonderful school to be part of' are just two of the positive comments received from staff.
- The school makes good use of special educational needs funding to provide pupils with the correct balance of education, therapy and care. This supports pupils and helps them to achieve well. For example, where physical exercise and rehabilitation are required, leaders ensure that an appropriate fitness programme is in place to meet pupils' individual needs. Speech and language therapy is also pivotal to raising pupils' achievement. The 'talk about therapy' led by the speech and language therapist provides pupils with strategies which enable them to successfully modify their anxious behaviours and effectively access their learning.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum excites, motivates and inspires pupils to learn. Pupils have access to a wide range of subjects with a core focus on developing skills in communication, literacy and mathematics. Also of paramount importance is the development of pupils' skills in acquiring independence. Such skills are carefully woven throughout the curriculum. For example, older pupils learn how to budget when visiting a supermarket so they know what they can and cannot afford to purchase. Such skills prepare them well for their futures.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment activities. They spoke with enthusiasm to the inspector about the many opportunities afforded to them, which include canoeing, weaving, swimming and horse riding. Such activities help reduce anxious behaviours and promote pupils' self-esteem.
- Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is threaded sensitively throughout the curriculum according to pupils' understanding and need. Staff are highly effective role models in showing pupils, through their own actions and demeanour, how to form positive working relationships and happily get along. Pupils are therefore encouraged to replicate these behaviours according to their stage of development. They are able to successfully develop their social skills and the characteristics necessary to be tolerant and understanding of each other's differences. This was exemplified throughout the inspection, where pupils were respectful of each other, recognising that while everyone is different, all should be treated equally.
- Leaders, including trustees, ensure that any additional funding received is put to good use. For example, funding to support disadvantaged pupils enables them to make the same, if not better, progress than their peers. Similarly, sports funding is used with careful thought to meet the needs of the pupils for whom it is intended.

- Parents are positive about the school. Most parents who responded to the online survey, or spoke to the inspector, stated that pupils are well looked after, are taught well, behave well and that they receive valuable information about their child's progress. They are confident that the school is well led and managed. Comments such as 'an amazing school' and 'this school offers the best opportunities for our child's future' are typical of the supportive comments made by parents about the quality of education and care the school provides for their children.
- Middle leaders are highly skilled practitioners who have a good understanding of how pupils with complex needs learn. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to monitor and evaluate how teaching impacts on learning to ensure that pupils achieve their full potential, especially those pupils who leaders have identified as being the most able.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is robust and accurate. Leaders link school development closely to their evaluation. However, development plans do not demonstrate well enough how actions taken will ensure that pupils make the best possible progress and fulfil their academic potential, or who will make these checks.

Governance

- The trustees of Shieling School have a wide range of skills and expertise to support leaders. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They ensure that the school continues to meet the independent school standards through visits and reviewing documentation.
- Trustees are acutely aware that they, along with all other staff at the school, are responsible for keeping children safe. They undertake relevant training to enhance their understanding and regularly review the school's safeguarding procedures to ensure that they are effective in minimising risk to pupils.
- Trustees are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, they do not routinely check that actions identified in the school's development plans are having the required impact on pupils' achievement. Therefore, trustees do not consistently hold leaders to account as rigorously as they could for the quality of care and education they provide for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding which pervades the school. Staff understand the need to protect these vulnerable pupils against all potential risks. Staff, irrespective of their role, know each pupil extremely well. They remain vigilant and keep a watchful eye on each individual.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are kept up to date in line with current government legislation and guidance. All staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. This high-quality training provides staff with the skills and confidence to take rapid action when concerns arise. These policies are readily accessible to parents on the website or in school.
- Leaders and trustees fully understand the importance of safer recruitment. They ensure that all staff are carefully checked and inducted prior to commencing employment. Risk assessments are thorough and regularly monitored by leaders to ensure that they remain

fit for purpose.

- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe. They are confident that staff in school will help and support them if they have any worries or concerns. Parents share this view, exemplified in the comment, 'every aspect of my child's well-being is cared for and nurtured, and the love and support shown by staff is inspiring.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers demonstrate a desire for pupils to achieve well. They provide pupils with learning activities which are imaginative and motivating, well suited to pupils' interests and needs. They create a positive atmosphere for learning through their passion, enthusiasm and the caring relationships they share with pupils. Consequently, pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and make strong progress in their learning.
- Teachers see beyond the complex needs of individual pupils. They have high expectations of pupils. They demonstrate resilience and determination to ensure that they get the best out of pupils. They expect pupils to work hard, be successful and achieve well, however small the steps of progress may be.
- Teachers and therapists work well. Together, they set bespoke targets for pupils to help them secure their next steps in learning, personal development and emotional well-being.
- Support staff are deployed well. As with teachers, they form strong relationships with the pupils and provide effective support, which contributes to pupils' good progress.
- Teachers have a good understanding of what each pupil knows, can do and understand. They effectively use this knowledge, combined with their strong subject knowledge, to plan learning opportunities that carefully meet the needs of each pupil. This allows pupils to make strong progress from often extremely low starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well catered for to ensure that their needs are successfully met. Consequently, they make similar progress to, and sometimes better than, other pupils in the school.
- Teachers carefully monitor pupils' learning and progress. They are able to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. This enables them to plan learning activities which will quickly tackle and close these gaps. However, teachers are aware that further work is needed to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress and fulfil their academic potential, especially those pupils identified as the most able.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils feel safe and secure. This is because the school teaches pupils to keep safe, appropriate to their development and understanding. For example, they have an awareness of who is safe to talk to, and not to approach people who they do not know.
- Staff receive high-quality training to recognise signs of harm and abuse. They are assiduous and act quickly to deal with any concerns. Daily briefings ensure effective communication between leaders and staff, which minimises risk to pupils.

- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their regular attendance. Records confirm that pupils attend well and any absence is quickly chased up.
- The school builds positive links within the local community. Pupils are seen out and about regularly. For example, they visit local restaurants. These opportunities help pupils to be more prepared for life beyond school and to enhance their levels of independence.
- Pupils enjoy the varied work experience opportunities they are offered. Staff carefully match these to pupils' interests and aspirations, for example in horticulture or catering. Staff ensure that pupils are well prepared for interviews through practice and support in completing job applications. The work of staff to ensure that pupils' future destinations carefully meet their needs is notable. As a result, no pupil leaves the school without being successful in securing a place in further education, training or employment.
- Pupils, staff and parents are very positive about behaviour and safety. Comments received by parents include, 'our child returns to us happy and beautifully cared for' and 'I am very confident in the individual care my child receives.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils who attend the school have significant complex needs which can result in displays of challenging behaviour. Staff know pupils well and forge extremely positive relationships with them. The detailed knowledge staff have of each pupil, coupled with their dedication and determination to provide the best care, allows them to manage pupils' behaviour well. Indeed, during the inspection there were times when pupils' behaviour was exemplary, for example during an assembly when watching a performance.
- Pupils who spoke with the inspector are adamant that staff are kind, caring and work tirelessly to ensure that they enjoy life in school. They spoke in positive terms about how they are made to work hard, especially in their communication, and to complete tasks to the very best of their ability. For example, older pupils were keen to read and discuss their favourite authors and styles of books. This they did with confidence and accuracy.
- Pupils trust the adults who work with them. As a result, pupils are able to build self-confidence and raise their self-esteem.
- The therapy and medical teams work closely with teaching staff. This close partnership reduces pupils' anxieties and enables them to access their learning more effectively. This contributes to the good progress pupils make. For example, eurythmy and colour light therapies have proven and significant benefits for pupils. Such therapies increase pupils' ability to successfully participate and interact in the world around them.
- Pupils are supervised well at all times during the school day as they move around the school and in lessons. For example, during breaktimes, pupils are carefully monitored when using outside equipment available to them, such as tricycles, climbing walls and swings.
- The physical restraint of pupils is used as a last resort by staff. While documentary evidence shows the number of incidents is decreasing, the school is keen to further reduce occurrences to a minimum.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment on entry is significantly below that expected for their age. This is due to their complex needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- A careful look at pupils' work carried out during the inspection confirms that pupils, over time, are provided with a range of activities to build their knowledge and skills. They are developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills. For example, pupils were able to confidently read recent work they had completed on their family tree. In mathematics, pupils are able to apply their understanding of money to set a budget when shopping.
- The good progress pupils make, coupled with the high-quality therapy they receive, ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Information and work viewed show there is no discernible difference between the achievement and progress of these pupils when compared to others in the school. In some cases, they make better progress.
- The school's records, which include assessment information and work completed by pupils, confirm that pupils make good progress from their starting points across a range of learning activities. This includes their skills in communication and their personal development. This is a result of good teaching. However, leaders are aware that further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that pupils are challenged further with their learning to allow them to make the very best possible progress and fulfil their academic potential, especially the most able pupils.

Sixth form provision

Good

- All aspects of sixth-form provision are good. Leaders and managers ensure that the good progress gained by pupils in the main school continues in the sixth form.
- Relationships between staff and students are exemplary. These relationships are based on mutual respect and the understanding of staff for each student and their individual needs.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers plan carefully and personalise learning to precisely meet the needs of students. Students have access to a range of accredited courses, which include functional skills in English and mathematics at entry level. Students also have access to vocational and community-based learning to provide them with the skills and confidence for the next stage of their learning or employment.
- Students have good access to impartial careers advice and guidance. Staff work closely and successfully to support students in identifying those next steps. Consequently, no student leaves the school without moving into education, training or employment.
- Work placements are sourced in close conversation with each student. Each placement is selected to reflect students' interests, strengths and abilities. For example, students currently attend placements in hospitality, agriculture and animal welfare. These provide students with valuable experiences of the world of work they may wish to pursue in the future.
- Leaders are reflective practitioners. They constantly review the curriculum to ensure that

it meets the needs of current students and enriches their experiences. They aspire to introduce more academic qualifications, in a range of subjects. Therefore, they are currently working to further develop students' skills across all areas of learning to ensure that they achieve their full academic potential, especially for those who are the most able.

School details

Unique reference number	113952
DfE registration number	835/6004
Inspection number	10035560

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.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	20
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Sheiling Special Education Trust Ltd
Chair	Jeremy Morris
Headteacher	Andy Walters
Annual fees (day pupils)	£43,824
Telephone number	01425 477488
Website	www.thesheilingringwood.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@thesheilingringwood.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Camphill Movement and was opened in 1951. In 2012, the arrangements under which it is owned and operated were revised and adjusted. Its proprietor is now the Sheiling Special Education Trust Limited.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. All pupils have moderate, severe or complex learning difficulties. They are placed

in the school by a wide range of local authorities from across the south of England.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is no off-site unit run by the school or in conjunction with other schools.
- The school is situated in extensive grounds in a rural location. The school's proprietor also operates the children's home, where most of the pupils live, and a specialist college, both of which are located on the same site.
- The head of school is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the school, under the direction of the principal. The principal also provides leadership for the children's home and the further education college.
- The school is currently undergoing a building project to provide a music room.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in every class, and all observations were conducted jointly with leaders. A range of therapeutic provision was also observed. The quality of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the principal, headteacher, leaders, staff and trustees. The inspector took into consideration the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire. A conversation took place with a social worker of pupils looked after.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils to listen to their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's development plan, and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress. Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- The inspector considered the eight responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and eight text messages were taken into account. In addition, the inspector met informally with parents to gather their views.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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