

6 December 2018

Mrs Abigale Bowe
Headteacher
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Weldbank Lane
Chorley
Lancashire
PR7 3NQ

Dear Mrs Bowe

Short inspection of Shaftesbury High School

Following my visit to the school on 20 November 2018 with Andrew Cook, HMI, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the school was last inspected, you and other leaders have ensured that planned actions for improvement have been followed through successfully. With the support of a very knowledgeable and experienced management committee, you have recruited a number of skilled and ambitious staff. You have secured the vision of 'a caring, structured environment in which pupils and staff feel safe, secure and valued,' which is shared by all stakeholders. As a result, there is extremely high staff morale. Staff made such comments as: 'Staff are consulted and opinions listened to' and 'Staff wellbeing is at the forefront of school managers' minds.' Parents are equally supportive of the school's work. Typical comments included: 'I can't thank staff enough', 'my child feels safe and attendance has improved' and 'the school is helping us to obtain an education, health and care plan (EHCP).' Pupils feel secure and valued by staff. When asked, pupils agreed that: 'It's a safe place to share your fears and worries.'

The quality of education continues to be good but with clear improvements since the last inspection. For example, you have ensured that all staff are clear about pupils' needs and abilities in English and mathematics. Staff are well-informed about

the social, emotional and mental health needs of all pupils. They have benefited from a clear focus on their continuous professional development alongside a strong appraisal system.

Staff have established very strong relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils engage well in lessons with good attitudes to learning. There is a clear emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This can be seen with the pristine displays around school that promote healthy eating, sporting events and the value of learning about different subjects. The curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils. Alternative providers enable pupils to follow a vocational path, for example in the fishing or mechanics industries. Some pupils can follow a particular interest, for example in music or art, so that they can achieve a GCSE or other qualification. Pupil premium funding is used well in support of disadvantaged pupils to overcome barriers to their learning. As a result, the progress they make and the range of qualifications achieved match those of their peers in school.

Middle leaders have developed their roles since the last inspection. They are tasked to provide subject action plans which contribute towards whole school improvement. They have had a positive impact in securing improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, all teachers and support staff make consistent and effective use of the information used in pupils' 'pen portraits' to plan their lessons. This information includes strategies to meet the needs of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. As a result, the majority of pupils make good progress against the learning, social, emotional and behaviour targets set for them. However, leaders recognise that the information gained from pupils' reading assessments on arrival at the school is not used well. Subsequently, formal, planned reading sessions are not part of the school's timetable.

Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare continue to be strengths of the school. You have encouraged pupils to abide by the agreed school code of conduct. Pupils are required to wear school uniform. Staff are consistent in their management of pupil behaviour. For example, they encourage pupils' use of appropriate language in and around school. Pupils respond well and work hard to manage their own behaviour. Leaders strive to improve the attendance rates of pupils. You provided a number of case-study examples which showed the positive impact of the school's work in support of pupils and families. Attendance is monitored well, especially in regard to alternative provision. As a result, leaders know where pupils are at any given time during a school day. However, attendance and absence information are insufficiently clear to establish trends for particular groups. For example, there are currently a number of 'high needs' pupils on reduced timetables. Their attendance rates have had a negative impact on the overall attendance figures for the school. Also, leaders do not yet check whether pupils on a reduced timetable have returned home after leaving the school premises.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture around safeguarding. Each morning and evening, staff hold briefing meetings to discuss the safety, wellbeing and progress of pupils. As a result, the staff team has a deep insight into the ongoing needs of each pupil. This information details the levels of support and guidance that are required for identified pupils on any given day. Pupils recognise that they are safe and secure in the school because staff know them so well.

Staff work well with other agencies and are persistent when needing to alert children's services to concerns. For example, they follow up issues relating to looked after children. Case studies provided compelling evidence to show the positive impact of the school's safeguarding arrangements on pupils' welfare and safety.

The school's policies regarding safeguarding are reviewed, agreed and updated by the management committee. The management committee has a named member in regard to safeguarding. Governors have undergone relevant updated safeguarding training, including for safer recruitment of staff. As a result, the school's recruitment of staff is in order as evidenced by the single central record.

A strength of the school's partnership working is shown by the regular shared training provided by the school for mainstream staff, parents and carers. These 'Let's talk' sessions cover such themes as child protection and mental health.

Inspection findings

- Inspectors explored how well teachers have developed their knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs and abilities in English and mathematics. Inspectors saw how teachers used information about pupils' learning to set new work at the right level. It was evident that teachers were skilled in pitching their questioning and explanations appropriately to each pupil. For example, in mathematics pupils were encouraged to explain their reasoning when attempting to solve linear equations. Work was modified to ensure that there was the right level of challenge for each pupil.
- This consistency of provision was evident in the OASIS and ASPIRE classes. For example, in English and science lessons, pupils were encouraged to take pride in their work because staff motivated and encouraged them to do well. Pupils showed commitment and resilience when revising for a science examination, with only occasional input from teaching or support staff required. Pupils demonstrated their independent reading, writing and comprehension skills, for example, when studying about the war poets.
- Inspectors observed that pupils used their reading and writing skills well to access mathematics, science and English lessons. However, there was no evidence of focused reading sessions or interventions forming part of each pupil's daily timetable. These would add invaluable structure to the learning of many pupils who have experienced disruption in their previous schooling.

- Inspectors also focused on the impact of staff in their management of pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilled and sensitive in their support of pupils with complex needs. For example, they recognise if and when pupils may have anxieties as soon as they enter the classroom, or following on from staff briefing sessions. As a result, special arrangements are put in place, for example a brief time out from the lesson, so that learning is not disrupted and the pupil concerned can become settled.
- Inspectors found that middle leaders make a strong contribution towards school improvement. For example, they are encouraged to develop subject plans that link well to the overall school development plan. They make presentations to the management committee so that members are well-informed about aspects of school improvement. All staff, including middle leaders, undergo robust appraisal procedures that hold them to account. Leaders make sure that staff follow school policies about teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders provide effective and helpful feedback to teachers following observations in lessons so that they reflect on and improve their practices. The school has good capacity to improve.
- The feedback gathered from parents, pupils and staff confirmed that most stakeholders value the school's provision. Most pupils who leave the school at the end of key stage 4 make good or better progress in their learning, behaviour, resilience and self-confidence. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, gain up to 8 GCSEs, with English, mathematics and science. All pupils have a personalised curriculum which allows balanced access to both academic and accredited vocational qualifications. Leaders monitor past pupils' abilities to sustain these placements. Many leavers are successful in sustaining their placements once secured.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- reading assessment information, secured when pupils first arrive at the school, is used effectively
- there is a whole-school approach to developing pupils' reading skills across subjects
- checks are made with parents that pupils on reduced timetables have returned home after leaving the school premises
- attendance monitoring information is used to improve attendance for different groups of pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the management committee, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jon Ashley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the team met with you and three senior leaders. Inspectors conducted joint observations of lessons in both the OASIS and ASPIRE facilities and across key stage 3 and key stage 4 with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. A meeting was held with four management committee members, including the chair and vice-chair. A meeting was held with the school's advisor. Inspectors looked at pupils' work books, folders and classroom displays. They observed pupils on the school corridors and at breaktime. Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's review of its strengths and areas to develop, the school development plan and information about pupils' ability levels, progress and outcomes. They also looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, including safe recruitment of staff and risk assessments, behaviour and attendance records, management committee reports and minutes of meetings. They considered a recent written report about the school from an external advisor. Inspectors spoke informally with pupils during breaktime. An inspector met formally with a group of pupils from both key stages to seek their views about the school. An inspector met with four parents from the school's OASIS provision. Inspectors considered 10 responses to the Parent View questionnaire, nine online text responses and a recent questionnaire survey conducted with parents by the school. There were no responses to the online pupil survey, but inspectors considered a recent questionnaire survey conducted with pupils by the school. Inspectors looked at 33 responses to the online staff questionnaire survey as well as a recent staff wellbeing survey.