

Inspection of an outstanding school: Shaftesbury High School

Headstone Lane, Harrow HA3 6LE

Inspection dates:

18–19 September 2019

Outcome

Shaftesbury High School continues to be an outstanding school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

We spoke to many pupils, who all told us they like coming to this school. Teachers and pupils get on well together. Pupils behave very well. They told us they feel safe at school and do not worry about being bullied because it rarely happens. If they are concerned about anything, they say they can talk to staff who will help them. Students in the sixth form support each other really well and told us they enjoy their time at school.

Leaders have developed an ambitious new approach to what pupils study at the school, which involves core lessons and project lessons. The core lessons focus on subjects. The project lessons are community-focused projects which look to develop pupils' job-related skills and their ability to lead independent lives in the future. This approach supports pupils to gain qualifications and prepares them well for college or work. Leaders tailor what pupils study to their individual needs.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the daily project lessons. They are thoroughly motivated by work that enables them to help different communities. Projects include coaching sports at a local primary school and making equipment for a new playground for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These projects help them develop important skills for work and their future lives. They use the knowledge and understanding that they learn in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. Staff have high expectations for every pupil and make sure that each one is well prepared for life beyond school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school teaches a core curriculum, which includes English, mathematics, science, computing and physical education (PE) for half of the day, and project lessons for the other half of each day. The project lessons develop skills which the pupils will need when they leave school.

Pupils choose which project lessons they attend. Their willingness to join in these lessons and to learn new skills is impressive. The projects are selected and agreed by staff and pupils together. Staff told us that pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are even more positive since the new curriculum and project learning have been introduced. Teachers skilfully build on pupils' learning from core lessons and help each pupil to apply their knowledge in real-life situations.

Leaders' planning makes it clear to teachers what they should teach. Pupils told us that the work develops from lesson to lesson and they learn new things each week. Their books also showed this. However, in some subjects, leaders have not made sure that the purpose of tasks and activities is clear and how these fit in with the subject plans.

The school has developed different pathways through the range of subjects and projects which match each pupil's individual needs. In most subjects, staff assess pupils' learning regularly. In some subjects, teachers keep a clear record of pupils' achievement and whether they are successful in meeting their targets. However, in other subjects, teachers do not check pupils' knowledge and understanding as effectively. They do not adapt subject teaching to address pupils' specific education, health and care (EHC) plans. This means that teachers do not identify and address the gaps in pupils' learning swiftly enough to help pupils to achieve as well as they can.

Many pupils leave school to attend college at the age of 16 but some pupils stay on into the sixth form. The curriculum continues to focus on developing pupils' skills for the workplace and being independent.

Parents and carers meet with teachers once a year to review their child's EHC plan. Parents' views inform the targets which are set at these meetings. Leaders are working on new systems to involve parents even more in setting their child's targets.

Leaders and governors work together to make sure that all staff are well supported and their workload is managed. Leaders provide well-being activities at the school for both pupils and staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Staff get regular training about safeguarding. They report any concerns to specifically trained leaders in the school, who provide the help needed.

Leaders ensure that they complete all the required safeguarding checks when recruiting staff. They also work well with other agencies, such as social care, to make sure that pupils and their families receive support when they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's plans for pupils' project work set out the knowledge and skills pupils are expected to learn and build upon. The quality of planning in the core subjects is not as coherent as it could be. Leaders need to ensure that teachers know how all parts of the curriculum link together and that pupils' progression through the core subjects is sharply planned and delivered.
- Sometimes, teachers do not check pupils' understanding effectively and adapt their teaching as necessary. Leaders should ensure that the school's ongoing assessments identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and that pupils receive the support they need and catch up quickly.

Background

When we have judged a special school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in November 2010.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	102260
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	10110434
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jean Lammiman
Headteacher	Matt Silver
Website	www.shaftesbury.harrow.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2016

Information about this school

- Shaftesbury High School is a secondary special school for pupils with learning difficulties and additional needs.

Information about this inspection

- We visited lessons across the school with senior leaders. We met with pupils and teachers, and looked at questionnaires completed by parents, pupils and staff. We also met with governors and held a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner.
- This inspection looked particularly at English, mathematics, PE and ICT.

Inspection team

Penny Barratt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Morrison

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019