

Inspection of a good school: Sheldon School

Hardenhuish Lane, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6HJ

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 December 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Sheldon School. They feel safe and welcome. Most work hard to meet staff's high expectations of them. Sometimes the work that pupils complete is not as ambitious as it could be and does not deepen their knowledge.

Most pupils behave well. They are courteous to one another and adults. However, sometimes behaviour in lessons interrupts learning. There is a new behaviour system in place. It is not yet being used consistently by all staff.

Pupils learn about the importance of mutual respect and tolerance. The 'Anti Bullying Charter' means that all pupils know how they should treat their peers. As a result, bullying is uncommon. Most pupils are confident that staff will stop bullying promptly if it happens.

Pupils develop their interests and talents through the many clubs available to them. Pupils are very positive about the range of activities that they can take part in. Parents share this view. Some pupils take on leadership roles such as prefects and members of the student council. Students in the sixth form support younger pupils and act as role models for them.

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

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) receive support from expert staff who ensure that they learn alongside their peers. Most staff use the guidance that leaders provide to meet pupils' individual needs. However, not all pupils get the help they need to keep up with their peers.

Leaders know what they want pupils to learn in each subject. They have considered the order in which to teach new knowledge and skills so that pupils can build on what they already know and can do. However, pupils do not always remember the most vital knowledge that leaders want them to know. Teachers do not always check what pupils know and can do. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their learning.

The curriculum is broad. Most pupils study two modern foreign languages at key stage 3. Leaders aim to increase the number of pupils who continue to study a language at GCSE. This means that more pupils will take all the subjects which make up the English Baccalaureate. The subjects available to students in the sixth form are well matched to their next steps in education or into the workplace.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain new learning clearly, including the vocabulary pupils need to know. However, some of the work pupils complete in lessons does not help them to learn more or to practise what they have learned in the past. This means that they do not always learn as much as they could.

The weakest readers get the help they need to become more fluent and confident with their reading. Recently, staff have begun to support pupils with reading across all areas of the curriculum. Leaders plan to increase the breadth of texts pupils read and promote reading for pleasure. These plans are in their infancy.

Most pupils behave well at school. They are keen to take part in lessons and share their views confidently. However, some pupils do not behave well enough. Staff do not always stop poor behaviour promptly. Therefore, it sometimes prevents learning from taking place.

Pupils learn about important issues such as healthy relationships and consent. Leaders adjust the curriculum in response to local and national trends. For example, following an increase in concerns about mental health after the national lockdowns, pupils now learn how to protect their mental health and how to seek support.

There is a strong focus on supporting pupils' wider development. Many pupils take part in clubs and activities offered by the school. These include opportunities for music, drama, sports and outdoor education. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths. This prepares them for life in modern Britain well. High-quality careers advice and education helps pupils to make informed decisions about their future.

Leaders have acted to reduce staff's workload. Teachers appreciate this and the support they have for their own well-being. They are proud to work at the school.

Leaders know the school well. They have identified appropriate priorities to improve the school. Trustees hold leaders to account and provide support. Decisions made by trustees are aligned with the vision and values of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn how to stay safe. They know how to seek help if they need to. Most have a trusted adult at school who they would go to with any concern they had.

Staff are aware of the signs that a pupil is at risk of harm. They report any concerns they have. Leaders act on information shared with them and make prompt referrals to other agencies if necessary.

Leaders check the suitability of staff in working with children and make sure that they have the knowledge they need to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not always remember what they have learned before. This means they are not able to build on their existing knowledge. Leaders need to make sure that pupils remember more of what they have been taught.
- A small minority of pupils do not behave well enough. This sometimes interrupts the learning of their peers. Leaders need to ensure that poor behaviour is dealt with effectively so the small number of pupils who need to improve their behaviour do so.
- The work that pupils do in lessons does not always enable them to acquire new knowledge or apply what they have learned before. As a result, they do not always learn as much as they could. Leaders need to ensure that work in lessons focuses on developing pupils' knowledge.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	136632
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10250465
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,645
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	294
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Louise Carver
Headteacher	Neil Spurdell
Website	www.sheldonschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2017 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses six unregistered alternative provisions and one registered alternative provision.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with hearing impairments.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, modern foreign languages and design technology.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases. They also met the headteacher to discuss safeguarding arrangements, including recruitment and allegations management.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils in Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Linda Peck Ofsted Inspector

Alun Williams 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 2022