

Inspection of Shaftesbury High School

Headstone Lane, Harrow HA3 6LE

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Shaftesbury High School are well cared for. They enjoy positive working relationships with staff. For example, in the mornings, pupils are greeted by a range of adults as soothing classical music fills the air. This helps to encourage a calm and focused start to each day. Staff are trained to support pupils to manage their behaviour. Leaders have set aside quiet spaces around the school to help with this. Pupils also have access to a rich programme of visits and opportunities. These are planned to help pupils to prepare for life beyond the school as young adults.

New leadership is starting to improve how well pupils learn. However, the curriculum in several subjects is not designed well. This is because it does not take sufficient account of what pupils already know and can do. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge and understanding progressively in different subjects.

Pupils enjoy school and are kept safe. Bullying is rare. If any incidences do occur, staff deal with things swiftly and effectively. At times, however, pupils' behaviour is disruptive. They do not conduct themselves in the way that leaders expect. This is because staff do not have consistent expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

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

The newly appointed headteacher has been swift to identify the strengths of the school and what improvements need to be made. Changes have been introduced and are beginning to have a positive impact. This includes reviewing the curriculum in some subjects to ensure that it is both ambitious and logically sequenced. For example, in mathematics, the curriculum now places greater emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of and fluency in calculation methods. Pupils regularly practise addition, subtraction, multiplication and division strategies. This supports them to solve increasingly complex real-life problems involving time, measurement and money.

However, the curriculum in several subjects does not fully consider pupils' needs and starting points. Sufficient thought has not been given to how learning should be structured so that pupils build their knowledge and understanding securely over time.

Teachers check pupils' understanding of what they have learned. However, weaknesses in leaders' curriculum design mean that teachers do not routinely check that pupils have understood and secured important knowledge in a subject. As a result, some misconceptions are not identified or corrected. Leaders are aware of this. They plan to ensure that teachers focus on checking pupils' understanding of the most important aspects of the curriculum.

In the sixth form, the curriculum is more carefully considered than in other year groups. It is ambitious and delivered well. Students are prepared successfully for adulthood. They are taught about employment, healthy relationships and independent living. Developing and practising knowledge in English and mathematics is also thoughtfully threaded through all planned learning. Examples of this include reading recipes when learning to prepare food, planning visits to the local shops and budgeting when buying ingredients.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' reading. A new phonics programme has been implemented and this is followed consistently across the school. As a result, pupils are supported to develop as fluent and confident readers.

Leaders have trained all staff to use a restorative approach to support pupils' behaviour. This approach is helping pupils to quickly feel calm again if they become upset or are struggling with behaviour. However, staff do not consistently communicate their expectations of behaviour to pupils, both in classrooms and around the school. For example, staff use different language to talk about school rules and routines. Appropriate behaviour support plans have been created for pupils who need them. However, these are not followed and implemented consistently by staff. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are mixed and they do not behave consistently well.

Leaders have ensured that effective systems are in place to manage pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Pupils' wider development is well considered. For example, they go on lots of outings, including to the cinema, other local schools, and museums. Pupils are supported to take on additional responsibilities. For example, they are encouraged to become a member of the school council or organise events to raise money for charity. The curriculum for relationships and sex education has been well designed. Content is age-appropriate, and leaders have thought carefully about how information is taught so that it is understood by all pupils. Teachers are sensitive and responsive to pupils' questions.

There is a strong focus on careers and work experience across the school. The sixth-form curriculum is designed to prepare pupils for the world of work and adulthood. For example, students access a range of work-related qualifications, including in English and mathematics. They are encouraged to think independently and make choices for themselves. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education, employment and training.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are considerate of staff workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff are fully trained to recognise signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff report any concerns they may have promptly using the agreed systems.

Leaders seek advice and guidance from a range of external agencies. This secures the right support for pupils and their families in a timely manner. Leaders keep meticulous records and ensure that all agreed actions are robustly followed up. Excellent relationships with specialist services, along with very positive partnerships with parents and carers, underpin the strong culture of safeguarding.

The curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders prioritise helping pupils to understand how to stay safe when outside of school and in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in several subjects does not take sufficient account of pupils' needs and their existing knowledge and understanding. Thought has not routinely been given to how learning should be structured so that pupils build their knowledge in a secure and logical manner over time. This means that some pupils do not learn and remember key ideas in a subject. Leaders need to ensure the curriculum is coherently designed so that pupils are able to build their understanding of important ideas cumulatively.
- Staff's expectations for pupils' behaviour are inconsistent. At times, they do not communicate their expectations clearly. As a result, pupils do not behave consistently well. Sometimes, their attitudes towards learning are not positive. Leaders should ensure that staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and communicate these clearly to pupils.

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	102260
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	10240995
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	172
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anand Pajpani
Headteacher	Sage Ball
Website	www.shaftesbury.harrow.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher has been in post since April 2022.
- The school has expanded considerably since the last inspection.
- The school provides education for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It caters for a wide range of additional needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- The inspection team completed deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, art, and personal, social and health education. To do this, they met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, had discussions with staff and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Discussions were also held with three representatives from the local authority.
- The inspection team reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records, and through discussions with staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and by reviewing their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Una Buckley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gary Rawlings	His Majesty's Inspector
Jude Wilson	His Majesty's Inspector

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