

Inspection of Shaftesbury School

Salisbury Road, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8ER

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Shaftesbury School are encouraged to be 'the best they can be'. Pupils have positive relationships with their teachers. Staff know pupils well. They encourage pupils to think deeply about what they are learning. Pupils remember important knowledge, and many achieve well. They are encouraged to read widely and often.

The school offers an impressive range of activities to develop pupils' talents and interests. Pupils enjoy attending clubs for sports, music and the arts. Trips, visits and community engagement projects are a regular feature of the school week. Sixth-form student leaders work with staff to ensure that younger pupils have a 'voice' in school improvement.

Staff ensure that pupils feel safe and happy. Pupils know how to stay healthy. However, some pupils do not have a secure understanding of healthy relationships.

Pupils benefit from strong pastoral care at Shaftesbury School. Pupils who are struggling, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), are well supported by pastoral staff.

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

Leaders carefully design the curriculum so that pupils learn a broad range of subjects. Pupils benefit from a curriculum that has a strong academic core, as well as vocational courses. They are nearly always taught by subject experts. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, learn well because teachers present information clearly. In the sixth form, students recall their prior learning and use this effectively to learn new content. This enables them to develop a rich understanding of their A Level subjects. Students learn to work independently and they use their time well.

Leaders use assessment effectively to help pupils to learn well. However, sometimes, teaching does not routinely correct pupils' mistakes. When this occurs, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and are not ready to move on with their learning.

The school has prioritised reading. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, read widely. They understand the importance of reading. Pupils who struggle with reading are well supported. The support is structured well so that they do not miss learning in any other subjects.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. On the occasions when pupils do not meet expectations, there are clear procedures which teachers follow. These are well understood by pupils. Pupils are supported to behave well so they do not miss out on their learning.

Pupils take part in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, including sport, drama, and design and technology projects. Pupils appreciate the events the school holds as

part of its science and technology programme. They enjoy many opportunities to broaden their experience outside the classroom and pursue their own interests. Sixth-form students enjoy taking on leadership roles. Leaders work closely with church leaders to support pupils' spiritual development.

Pupils learn how to stay safe, and the importance of physical and mental well-being. However, some areas of the personal, social, health education curriculum are not delivered consistently well. For example, some pupils do not have a secure knowledge of healthy relationships

Pupils benefit from a careers programme that helps them to prepare for their next steps. Students in the sixth form are well informed about career options, for example through visits to apprenticeship providers. In addition, when students apply to university, they are well supported and staff provide helpful advice.

Pupils with SEND receive effective pastoral support. When teachers have appropriate information about pupils with SEND, they identify pupils' needs and adapt the curriculum effectively. However, staff do not always have accurate information about how they can support pupils to learn well. When this occurs, teaching does not always adapt to meet pupils' needs, and some pupils with SEND fall behind with their learning.

Leaders know how to improve the school further. Recent changes to the pastoral, SEND and safeguarding team are starting to have a positive impact. Leaders consider teachers' workload and well-being when making decisions. The school benefits from and contributes to the work of the multi-academy trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school puts the safety and well-being of pupils at the heart of everything they do. Teachers feel confident reporting concerns. Leaders are working hard to make sure pupils do, too.

Leaders keep accurate and detailed records of all concerns. They work collaboratively with external agencies. Leaders make decisions which are in the best interests of the pupils. Pupils feel safe.

Safer recruitment practices are in place. Leaders have developed a culture of vigilance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always have accurate information to help them to support pupils with SEND. When this happens, the curriculum is not adapted effectively to enable pupils with SEND to learn as well as their peers. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not develop a secure understanding of the subjects they study. Leaders must swiftly implement their plans to ensure that teaching enables all pupils with SEND to learn well.
- The teaching of relationships and sex education is not consistently strong for all year groups. As a result, not all pupils have a secure knowledge. Some have a weaker understanding of healthy relationships. Leaders need to ensure that pupils learn all aspects of the intended curriculum.

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	140898
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10256664
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	908
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	177
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Rees
Headteacher	Donna London-Hill
Website	www.shaftesburyschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Sherborne Area Schools Trust.
- The school uses five registered alternative provision settings for its pupils.
- The school has boarding provision for 100 pupils. There are currently 24 boarders.
- Shaftesbury School is a voluntary controlled school in the Diocese of Salisbury.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. As part of this, they held discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at work they had completed.
- An inspector met with sixth-form students remotely when they were learning at home on day two of the inspection, due to severe weather.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted's Parent View survey, the pupil survey and the staff survey.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed plans that support pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed documentation related to safeguarding and referrals to the local authority. They also spoke to staff about how they keep pupils safe.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and the multi-academy trust, and reviewed documentation relating to governance.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Thomas	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Chapman	Ofsted Inspector
Benjamin Houghton	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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