

Inspection of a good school: Shenley Brook End School

Walbank Grove, Shenley Brook End, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK5 7ZT

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 2024

Outcome

Shenley Brook End School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Gareth McCluskey. This school is part of 5 Dimensions Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tony Nelson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Malcolm Dobell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of this school's culture. Academic and personal development are equally important. Staff are ambitious for all and the curriculum remains broad from Year 7 onwards, with some bespoke programmes where appropriate. Staff understand they must inspire learning beyond merely preparing pupils for examinations. They aim that pupils should also value and develop skills like enquiry and problem-solving. Consequently, pupils achieve well, including in examinations, and go on to meaningful destinations, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

There are many extra-curricular opportunities which enable pupils to explore talents and interests and to take on leadership responsibilities. Parents and pupils alike value these. There are also events which bring the community together, for example the recent 'High School Musical' and the basketball academy partnership.

Staff manage behaviour effectively and have positive relationships with pupils. Sixth-form students are excellent role models. Consequently, most pupils behave well and are respectful. Pupils recognise that behaviour has improved. Bullying is not tolerated, and incidents are addressed effectively. The school provides strong pastoral support. Staff work closely with pupils and families, and pupils and families value the care provided. Parents talk of their children 'thriving' here and pupils feel safe and happy, with people to go to if they need help.

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

The school has identified what pupils need to know and be able to do at each point. Consequently, the school's curriculum is coherently sequenced from Year 7 to 13. In

many areas, curriculum thinking considers how these building blocks connect more broadly over time to strengthen learning further. This means that teachers can help pupils to use what they have learned with increasing confidence and precision.

Teachers know pupils well and most adapt approaches effectively for individuals based on the information provided about any additional needs. Teachers introduce new content clearly. Most select appropriate activities which help pupils to understand what they need to know and be able to do. In many lessons, teachers successfully help pupils to develop their thinking and reasoning. For example, in key stage 3 drama and geography, and also in the sixth form, pupils spontaneously draw on their prior learning to help them give detailed answers to questions and participate enthusiastically in discussion.

Pupils' work generally is of an appropriate standard, including that of pupils with SEND. However, the delivery of the curriculum is not as consistent as it could be across the school. In some cases, pupils' verbal and written answers are not as developed as they could be. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not always focused enough on the quality and depth of pupils' understanding, or on how accurately and independently they can apply their learning. In these cases, teachers' adaptations and feedback are not always as effective as they could be.

The school's literacy strategy has helped to develop a strong culture of reading. Pupils read widely through structured tutor sessions. They also regularly use the large and richly stocked library. There is very effective support for pupils who need help with reading. Staff identify who needs additional help and the gaps they have. Support is then targeted accordingly. The contribution that subjects make to the development of pupils' reading is variable at the moment. The school has identified this as an area they want to develop further.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school. Most pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. Classrooms are calm and purposeful, and are based on clear routines and positive relationships. The school has acted decisively to help pupils who struggle to meet its expectations. The new inclusion area and 'behaviour coaches' have already made a real difference. However, there remain some pupils whose behaviour does not meet the school's expectations and who require significant support. The school's work to help them is, rightly, ongoing.

The very well-designed 'Life Skills' programme covers required personal development content comprehensively as well as local issues. Pupils learn how to navigate real and online worlds and relationships. They explore issues of diversity and are very accepting of others who are different to themselves. The school's strong careers provision benefits from a wide range of partners from the world of work, education and training. Personal development and careers activities are fully inclusive. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in employment and education as young adults.

Trustees discharge their statutory duties diligently, not least for safeguarding. School and trust leaders understand the importance of nurturing a positive working environment. All staff have access to high-quality professional development and staff workload is at the forefront of decision-making. Staff recognise this and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' checks on pupils' learning in lessons are not as consistently effective as they could be. This means that some pupils could achieve even higher than they currently do. The school should continue to develop and support teachers' use of formative assessment so that all teachers can adapt their teaching and feedback more precisely to help all pupils apply their learning to more complex tasks.
- The final phase of the school's literacy strategy is not yet fully embedded. Consequently, reading across the curriculum is not as consistent as it could be. The school should continue to support teachers to deliver the disciplinary literacy strategy so that pupils get the most out of texts in lessons.
- A small number of pupils struggle to meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. As a result, they do not consistently show the same levels of respect for others and the school culture that the majority do. The school should continue to refine its pastoral and inclusion approaches with these pupils to help them, and staff, understand and manage their behaviours effectively.

Background

When we have judged 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 January 2015.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136730
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10296359
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,879
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	370
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Malcolm Dobell
CEO of trust	Tony Nelson
Website	www.sbeschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of 5 Dimensions Trust.
- The current head of school took up his post in September 2023.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders of the school and trust leaders. The lead inspector held meetings with the chair of the board of trustees and some trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of trustees' meetings.
- Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including free-text responses. They also took account of the responses to the staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of parents, staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Mary Davies, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Cousins	Ofsted Inspector
John Burridge	Ofsted Inspector

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