

# Inspection of Sheldon School

Hardenhuish Lane, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6HJ

---

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Peter Lynch. This school is an academy trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Louise Carver.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils feel part of the 'Sheldon community.' The school has high expectations for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to be their best. As a result, there is a purposeful ethos.

The school has refined and clarified its expectations for pupils' behaviour. Both pupils and staff understand and value the impact of this. In lessons, pupils focus on their learning. Pupils conduct themselves well during social times. The school has a large range of spaces for pupils to use. Pupils use this space well for sports, socialising, having a quiet place to sit or to run events, such as a charity cake sale.

The school has worked with parents and pupils to review how the school deals with incidents of bullying or discrimination. The school community has focused on promoting equality and inclusivity. Pupils report this has caused a marked improvement. Incidents have reduced. The school responds quickly when pupils report their concerns.

Pupils enjoy attending a range of clubs. Many pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The school reviews and plans clubs to appeal to pupils' interests. For example, the Pokémon card club is very popular.

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

The school has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. In the sixth form, there is a wide programme of study. Teachers have a high level of subject knowledge. Students describe their learning as 'scholarly.' They are well prepared to take the next steps into higher education, apprenticeships or other training. The school has recently focused on deepening and refining the sequence of the curriculum. As a result, the curriculum has become clearer about what pupils will learn and when. Even so, in a few subjects, it is not fully established.

Pupils' published outcomes are below average, having previously been in line with national outcomes. The focus on developing the curriculum, along with higher expectations for learning, means there is a positive culture. However, the revised curriculum needs time to impact on pupil outcomes.

Teachers revisit pupils' learning to help them remember it better over time. As a result, pupils recall their learning. For example, in modern foreign languages, pupils apply their grammatical knowledge well. Teachers check how well pupils have understood their learning. They use this to help pupils know what they need to do next to improve. Sometimes this information is not used well to identify misconceptions pupils may have.

The school has a hearing impairment resource base. Throughout the whole school, teachers ensure their practices are highly inclusive regardless of whether a pupil with a hearing impairment is in the classroom or not. This is the culture of the

school. Teachers receive the information they need to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND receive the right support to help them.

The school monitors and checks how well pupils can read. Pupils who need to secure their phonic knowledge, or to read with fluency, have focused lessons to help them improve. Pupils know there is an expectation to read more widely.

Since the pandemic, the school has seen an increase in persistent absence. This is particularly high among disadvantaged pupils. The school knows these pupils do not perform well in final examinations. Working with external support, the school has a rigorous process to tackle poor attendance. Attendance is beginning to improve.

The school plans a comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils learn about relationships in an age-appropriate way. In the sixth form, PSHE prepares students well for the future. For example, they learn to manage finance. The careers programme ensures pupils receive a range of helpful guidance and advice.

Pupils relish their roles as subject ambassadors and prefects. They contribute to shaping the school. Through 'Project 5000', sixth-form students volunteer in and out of school. Many support younger pupils as mentors.

Working with new leadership in the school, the trust has a clear knowledge of the school's priorities. The school has sometimes not worked strategically to evaluate the impact of the work they are doing. The school has put mechanisms in place to improve this.

Stakeholders are positive about the recent changes, particularly the high expectations the school has. Staff feel well supported by leaders in the school. They value the work they are doing and see how it is helping pupils to learn better over time.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a few parts of the curriculum, the depth and sequencing of what pupils learn has only recently been planned with greater precision. This means it is in the early stages of being implemented. As a result, it has not had the impact on outcomes for pupils that the school is ambitious for. The school needs to ensure the curriculum is implemented effectively across all year groups.

- In a minority of subjects, teachers do not act on the assessment information they have. Although the mechanisms for checking how well pupils have understood are in place, sometimes this information is not used to identify misconceptions pupils may have. The school needs to ensure that assessment information is used effectively.
- Some areas of school leadership have worked in isolation from other areas. This means data has not been shared intelligently between leaders to strategically inform actions. The school has recently put in systems to make this cohesive. The school needs to make sure leaders have the strategic overview and can share information knowledgeably.

## 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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136632
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10297982
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,662
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	289
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Louise Carver
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Lynch
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sheldonschool.co.uk">www.sheldonschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 December 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust.
- The school hosts a specialist provision for pupils with hearing impairment.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
- The school uses 11 alternative providers. Two are registered and nine are unregistered.
- 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

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history and art. 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.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors met and spoke with a large number of pupils from across all year groups. They spent time talking to pupils at social times.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, self-evaluation documents, minutes of trust meetings and records of behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also viewed the responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Nicholson	Ofsted Inspector
Benjamin Houghton	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Willis	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Field	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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024