

Inspection of a good school: The Shrubberies School

Oldends Lane, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 2DG

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 April 2024

Outcome

The Shrubberies School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Respectful relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to feel safe and happy in school. Pupils learn how to communicate their needs and they respond to others appropriately. Over time, pupils develop the skills and knowledge to recognise and manage their emotions and to make positive choices.

The school is a calm place, where pupils' social, emotional and mental health development is a priority. Pupils who attend The Shrubberies School and the sixth form at the Apperley Centre have special educational needs and/or disabilities. At this school, pupils learn that 'difference is okay'.

Pupils are eager to learn. The school's new curriculum has initially focused on implementing the 'Myself and My Body' aspects. Within these aspects, pupils enjoy a wide range of carefully planned enrichment activities they may continue when they leave school. For example, pupils learn to ride bikes, grow plants and cook fresh vegetables. Established routines help pupils to grow their confidence and independence. Pupils celebrate each other's successes with a 'Wendy Wiggle'. Preparation for adulthood begins the moment pupils start school. This increased ambition means pupils are well equipped with important life skills. Many pupils gain nationally recognised qualifications before they leave school.

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

The school has recently revised its curriculum pathways and subjects to identify precisely the knowledge pupils should know and remember. The new pathways are implemented well in some subjects, such as physical education and personal, social, health and economic education. In these subjects, there are carefully planned opportunities to revise important language, knowledge and skills. Teachers know precisely the knowledge and skills they need to check pupils have remembered and can do. They use this assessment information accurately to identify what pupils should learn next. In addition, this information is used to check pupils' progression through the curriculum and to write

appropriate targets for pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. However, in some subjects, the curriculum pathways are not complete. In these subjects, teachers' checks of pupils' knowledge and skills are not sufficiently accurate. Therefore, learning activities do not support pupils to secure knowledge and understanding of important concepts well enough.

Pupils' interest in rhymes, songs, books and words is developed right from the start. The approach to engage pupils to learn and use new language is individualised. For example, where pupils enjoy a sensory approach, their learning is adapted appropriately. Staff use every opportunity to support pupils to communicate successfully using signs, symbols or words. Some pupils can use their phonics knowledge to read with increasing independence.

The school has high expectations for each pupil. Pupils study the school's careers curriculum to raise their aspirations for the future. Pupils particularly enjoy real-life experiences, for example travel training or work experience. Sixth-form students apply for in-house jobs, such as the school's dog walker. The school knows which elements of the careers curriculum need strengthening. For example, it recognises the need to develop links with further education providers to ensure pupils know some of the options available when they leave school.

An important part of the school's preparation for adulthood is the promotion of pupils' health and well-being. Pupils regularly take part in physical exercise and therapies, such as using the hydro pool and attending swimming lessons. They learn how eating healthy foods and being active can help their mental health. Pupils enjoy visits to the local garden centre and yoga sessions. Over time, pupils learn how to build their resilience and self-care skills. Being healthy helps pupils to attend school regularly. Where this is not possible due to medical needs, the school ensures external agencies support these pupils appropriately. The school takes effective action to reduce levels of absence wherever possible. This works well for most pupils.

Pupils' behaviour is positive throughout the school. If pupils become anxious or upset, staff support them appropriately and swiftly. Staff help pupils to make the right choices. They know the pupils well and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour.

The governing body supports the school to carry out its statutory duties, including under the Equality Act 2010, appropriately.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has recently revised its curriculum. This means that staff do not have a secure knowledge of the new curriculum's expectations, so they do not check pupils'

knowledge effectively. As a result, in some subjects, learning activities do not support pupils to secure knowledge and understanding well enough. The school needs to support staff to develop their knowledge of the revised curriculum so that they assess and identify pupils' next steps accurately.

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 March 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 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

Unique reference number	115823
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10322225
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Medcroft
Headteacher	Wendy Newby
Website	www.shrubberieschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Pupils who attend this school have EHC plans. Most pupils have severe or profound learning difficulties.
- The Shrubberies School sixth form is located in the Apperley Centre, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 2ER.
- The headteacher was formally appointed as the substantive headteacher in March 2022.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils and governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the local authority's school improvement partner and the director of the alternative provision used by the school.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a known adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and early reading, mathematics, physical development and physical education, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the school's curriculum and provision with leaders. Inspectors visited the sixth-form provision and considered the information provided by the school.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times and spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- 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.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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