

Inspection of Sheiling School

Horton Road, Ashley, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 2EB

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 November 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love to learn at this nurturing school. Staff are on hand to greet them as they arrive each day. They take the time to form trusting relationships by getting to know pupils' likes and dislikes. This makes pupils feel understood and valued.

Most pupils have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many have arrived from unsuccessful placements elsewhere. The school expertly guides pupils to overcome barriers to learning and unlock their potential. Pupils work hard, explore career paths and find friendships. They quickly gain a sense of belonging and safety, which shows in their excellent behaviour and high attendance.

The school does not limit pupils' aspirations. Pupils achieve well because staff make every moment a learning opportunity. For example, pupils write the weekly menu to support their literacy skills. To develop social skills, they interact positively with others by asking for items in 'tuck shop' time.

The school takes great care to prepare pupils for adulthood. Upper school (sixth-form) students work together to complete 'mini enterprise' projects to prepare them for the world of work. Residential and trips on local transport build pupils' independence. Visits to shops in the community help pupils experience real-life situations.

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

Pupils study a rich, broad curriculum that matches their complex needs. Across subjects, the school has broken content down into small 'I can' steps. It allows teachers to identify pupils' starting points precisely. The school carefully integrates outcomes from pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to create an individualised curriculum. They successfully weave the core reading, writing and mathematics skills across the school day. For example, pupils in upper school use their mathematical skills when measuring equipment in design technology. In woodwork, pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise reading the safety rules. The school continuously reviews the curriculum to ensure it is relevant for all. Over time, pupils experience success and a sense of achievement.

In the main, teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They present content clearly and build pupils' knowledge in a logical order. The school works seamlessly with therapists to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. For example, pupils, including those who are non-verbal, use signs and symbols to help them express their opinions and needs. As a result, they build up their communication and language skills successfully. Occasionally, some staff do not have the subject-specific expertise to help pupils grasp concepts securely.

Reading is a priority. The school aims for all pupils to be functional readers by the time they leave. It bases the well-thought-through phonics programme on an accurate assessment of pupils' needs. Pupils develop their reading ability and

enjoyment appropriate to their stage of development. Many delight in being able to read books they were unable to read before. However, a few staff do not pronounce the sounds within words with sufficient precision. This limits some pupils' reading accuracy.

Pupils show demonstrable improvement in their behaviour after joining the school. This is because the school sets clear routines and reinforces respectful behaviour. Across the phases, pupils develop highly positive attitudes towards their education. Specialist staff support the few who struggle to manage their behaviour very well. Pupils develop the social skills that enable them to enjoy diverse enrichment activities and clubs. These include swimming, horse riding, sports and board games. Off-site trips, such as accessible cycling, enhance the curriculum. They allow students in the upper school to develop important life skills.

Staff nurture pupils' personal development exceptionally well. To broaden pupils' talents and interests, they create large-scale art and perform at music workshops and festivals. Pupils' service to the school and the wider community is commendable. They contribute to charities, grow vegetables and plant trees in the school's grounds. The school council helps with important decisions like budgeting for the new playground equipment. Assemblies and immersive experiences, such as during Black History Month, Michaelmas and Holi, add to pupils' cultural awareness.

Pupils show the qualities they need to succeed in school and beyond. Staff use real-life scenarios to discuss pertinent topics and fundamental British values. These include online safety, tolerance, consent and healthy relationships. Students in the upper school learn that 'it is okay to have different opinions', but they should respect the views of others. Careful careers guidance help students make informed choices about their next steps, including apprenticeships and vocational qualifications. Pupils, including upper school students, enjoy work experience in school or the local community. Most go on to take college courses.

A strong culture of teamwork exists. Teachers appreciate the consideration the school has for their emotional well-being and workload. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work.

Trustees have a strong overview of the school's work. They understand its priorities. They offer effective support and challenge to ensure that the school's actions positively impact on the quality of provision. This includes checks on health and safety, safeguarding, equality and staff well-being.

The school fully meets the independent school standards and complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. It also meets the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Across the school phases, including in the upper school, a few staff who support pupils in lessons lack sufficient subject expertise to teach the curriculum as intended, including in early reading. Occasionally, this hinders pupils from securely retaining knowledge as well as they could. The school should ensure that all staff have the relevant subject expertise to build and extend pupils' learning in all subjects.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	113952
DfE registration number	838/6004
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10341999
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Sheiling Special Education Trust
Chair	Jon Freeman
Headteacher	Andrew Walters
Annual fees (day pupils)	£75,428
Telephone number	01425 477 488
Website	www.thesheilingringwood.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@thesheilingringwood.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 to 25 November 2021

Information about this school

- The Sheiling School provides education for pupils with moderate, severe or complex SEND. All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan. They are placed in the school by a wide range of local authorities.
- The school's proprietor also operates a residential home and college. These are located on the same site as the school.
- The school's educational approach is based on the work of Rudolf Steiner.
- The head of school is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the school, under the direction of the principal. The principal provides leadership for the residential home and college.
- The school has fewer than five children in the early years provision. Therefore, a separate judgement has not been made.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school's previous full standard inspection took place from 23 to 25 November 2021.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the head of school, the deputy head of school and a range of staff to discuss aspects of the school's work. The lead inspector met with trustees of the proprietor body. They also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority commissioning team for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, design technology and personal, social, emotional and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, 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.
- 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 conducted a range of activities to confirm whether the school met the independent school standards in full. This included health and safety checks of the premises, risk assessments, record-keeping for behaviour management and supervision during social times.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and supervision on arrival at school, in classrooms and at lunchtime. An inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences in school. An adult was present during this time to support pupils' use of signing and assisted technology.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors spoke to a sample of parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Simons

Ofsted Inspector

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