

Edington & Shapwick School

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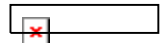
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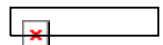
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Introduction and summary

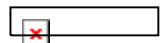


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

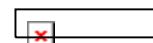
Information about the school



Edington and Shapwick School is an independent school for boys and girls aged between 8 and 18 years with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). The school originally opened on the Edington site in 1974 for pupils aged 8 to 13 years. Provision on the Shapwick site for pupils aged 14 to 18 years opened in 1981. The two schools amalgamated in 1994 under the leadership of two joint headmasters. The school was approved by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 1995 as suitable for the admission of pupils for whom statements of special educational need are maintained.

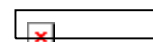
There are 160 pupils on roll, of whom 125 are boys and 35 are girls. Forty eight are day pupils and the rest are termly or weekly boarders, due to the distance from their homes. Just over half (83) of the current pupils have a statement of special educational need. All pupils admitted meet the school's admission criteria in that they have an assessment that they have specific learning difficulties, are of at least average potential and do not present significant emotional or behavioural difficulties in addition to their specific learning difficulties.

Summary of main findings



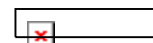
Edington and Shapwick School is a very effective and successful school. The pupils make good progress both academically and socially as a result of very good quality teaching and a very good, well planned and flexible curriculum which is specifically designed to meet the particular needs of the pupils. Good quality residential provision is made for those pupils who board on a weekly or termly basis, usually because their homes are too far away to allow daily travel.

What the school does well



- it provides very good teaching which is appropriately challenging for pupils and which carefully takes into account their specific needs;
- staff nurture confidence in the pupils which encourages them to achieve well in learning;
- pupils make good progress, which is reflected in the very good results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and in the very good value-added results;
- the school very effectively promotes the personal and social development of the pupils, so that they become self confident, responsible and mature young people;
- relationships are excellent between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves, reflecting the caring and supportive ethos of the school; and
- the joint headmasters provide very effective leadership of the school.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



- carry out checks with the Criminal Records Bureau at the level appropriate for particular staff roles and confirm the medical fitness of all potential employees prior to appointment;
- review the policies for the welfare of pupils;
- improve the policy relating to pupils' activities away from school as detailed in section 3;
- improve the information provided to parents as detailed in section 6; and
- review the complaints procedure as detailed in section 7.

What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002

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In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

Next steps

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Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- devise a school development plan to guide future planning more clearly; and
- adopt a common format for medium-term planning across the school, so that there is a clearer overview of what is to be taught to each age group.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

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1. The quality of education provided by the school

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The quality of the curriculum

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The quality of the curriculum is very good. It includes a broad range of subjects in line with the National Curriculum, religious education (RE), citizenship and personal, social and health education (PSHE). French is taught throughout the secondary stage. A good range of compulsory after-school activities enhances the curriculum by contributing to pupils' specific skills in sporting and creative areas and to their personal and social development.

The school defines itself as a specialist school for pupils with dyslexia and rightly places a strong and systematic emphasis on the development of language, literacy and numeracy. This results in pupils' very good progress in these skills. The allocation of time to English and language-related work is necessarily high; other subjects such as music and French at Key Stage 3, have a limited allocation but provision is nonetheless carefully planned.

Schemes of work are based on the National Curriculum. Almost all are extensive and some, such as those for English, science, mathematics and history and music are very good, making effective use of national and commercially produced materials. Some have good quality supplementary

advice which makes explicit the ways in which the specific needs of dyslexic pupils should be taken into account to plan effective teaching. Another strong feature in some planning is the frequent reference to links with other curricular areas, helping pupils to make connections between learning in different subjects and aiding their retention of new information. Though planning systems are varied in style, some are very good and all are at least satisfactory. It would be constructive to develop a common format for medium term planning so that progression and continuity within subjects can be more easily tracked across all key stages.

Several departments usefully include a development plan. It would be productive for all departments to do this so that an on-going development plan could be evolved with school-wide priorities identified and agreed by staff and governors as the curriculum policy suggests.

Careers guidance is comprehensive and makes very profitable use of the school's long and successful partnership with the Connexions Service adviser. Provision is well developed through an imaginative range of activities from Year 9. These include the use of aptitude surveys, a licensed interactive computer programme, team building projects and group and individual guidance. In addition, pupils have an intensive two days experience at a regional shopping centre where they work on aspects of the retail business. There is also an annual 'Works Week', which ensures that a wide range of potential careers can be explored in some detail.

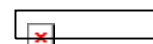
Sixth form courses are provided in close partnership with Bridgwater College. As well as making every effort to meet students' preferences, the school makes careful and effective provision for their pastoral support and care. Sixth form staff maintain close contact with college tutors to ensure that they are alert to students' needs, contributing to their ability to work with growing independence and confidence.

The speech and language therapy department gives very effective specialist support to the school in shaping its response to the particular needs of pupils with dyslexia. Effective screening and assessment identify individual needs and the department operates with great flexibility to meet them.

A high proportion of pupils has a statement of special educational need. All of them have individual education plans, which take careful account of their individual learning needs and support requirements. The high quality therapeutic support of the speech and language department and the school's very good quality teaching results in these pupils' high achievement.

The opportunity to perform in assemblies and concerts and to work for nationally accredited awards gives pupils considerable satisfaction as well as the chance to have their sense of personal worth confirmed and their self esteem augmented through worthwhile and enjoyable endeavours.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and often better. It was very good or better in just over half of the lessons observed, including several where it was of very high quality.

In addition to good knowledge and understanding of their subjects, teachers demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of the particular needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties and ensure that their teaching meets the individual needs of the pupils. The skilful use of questioning and the acceptance and extension of the pupils' answers, where necessary, leads the pupils to answer readily and to try harder. There is a very good induction procedure for teachers new to the school and an extensive range of opportunities for continuing professional development.

The very best teaching occurs on both sites and in several subjects. In these lessons teachers are

very confident in their subject knowledge and, where appropriate, the syllabus and requirements of the GCSE examination. They have high but realistic expectations of the pupils and ensure that the tasks set are well explained and are short and sharply focussed to meet the particular learning needs of the pupils. Such lessons are conducted at a brisk and sometimes very brisk pace. The work set is carefully planned, is interesting and often challenging and effectively motivates and engages the pupils' interest.

The pupils are keen to learn and work hard in lessons because of the interesting tasks they are given. This is reflected in their timely arrival at lessons, despite the distance between some teaching rooms on the Shapwick site. Lessons start promptly and teachers quickly engage the pupils, so that maximum use is made of the time available.

The teachers' planning clearly identifies the learning objectives for the lessons. However, these are not always explicitly shared with the pupils or used by the pupils to review their learning and progress at the end of the lesson. Where this is done, it helps to support and consolidate the learning and progress made by the pupils.

The work of the teachers is supplemented by the work of the speech and language therapists and the occupational therapist. This usually takes place in withdrawal sessions for a period of intensive individual work. This work has clear aims and effectively supports the pupils' work in the classrooms by enabling them to develop strategies and techniques to improve their learning.

The setting of clear tasks for 'prep' consolidates and extends the pupils' learning in lessons. Good support to pupils by teachers is available in these sessions so that they make an effective contribution to the pupils' learning.

Resources for teaching and learning are good. Computers, including individual laptops, are used effectively, both in lessons and in prep sessions. Where interactive whiteboards are available, these are used very effectively. The wider availability of these would support teaching and learning in all subjects, particularly for pupils who learn most effectively by visual means.

Feedback in lessons, prompt marking and high quality feedback within a short time give the pupils a clear understanding of the progress they are making and of what they need to do to improve further. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the progress and particular needs of individual pupils. This is achieved by thorough initial and ongoing assessment. The individual targets set for each pupil focus clearly on what the pupil needs to do to improve their learning.

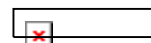
Pupils make good progress in lessons. It is very good in just over half the lessons. Very good progress over a longer period of time is reflected in the high attainment in GCSE at the end of Year 11.

A significant proportion of pupils go on into the sixth form. This provides a good range of courses at a local further education college, and there is very effective additional support by the school and the Connexions Service. Previous pupils have gone on to further and higher education, including university, and to further training.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The school is committed to promoting all aspects of pupils' personal development. The well-thought-

out programmes of work in RE, PSHE and citizenship contribute to the ethos of the school, as does the strikingly supportive atmosphere created by staff and evident in the very good relationships between adults and pupils. By the time pupils leave they have developed into thoughtful and considerate young adults. Throughout the school pupils are given opportunities that encourage and develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Discussions with pupils confirm this. Pupils made many positive comments about how the school helps them in their work. In some cases pupils reported being unhappy at their previous schools but they now contrast that with happier experiences at Edington and Shapwick.

The school provides many effective social and cultural opportunities by which pupils develop a depth to their characters. Individual pupils have in the past, and still do, represent their county in a range of sports. Daily opportunities enable pupils to take part in a range of leisure interests. Pupils select three activities from a wide choice and they follow these for each term.

Pupils are active in their consideration for others. They undertake a range of charitable fundraising initiatives. These include contributing to the recent tsunami disaster appeal as well as raising money for a charity which trains dogs to help disabled people. Assemblies also focus on the morality of trade between nations. For example, a tutor group presentation to the school about 'FairTrade' resulted in pupils buying more of these products from the school tuck shop.

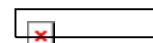
Confidence and community awareness are a hallmark of all pupils. This is brought about because staff treat the pupils with respect and present good role models. This view is not shared by one-quarter of the pupils who responded to the questionnaire, but the inspection found no evidence to support this opinion. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and the relaxed nature of their exchanges encourages pupils to accept the significant demands which staff make.

The school provides a good range of cultural visits both within the locality as well as nationally. These are as diverse as the Tate Gallery and St Fagans Museum of Welsh Culture. Opportunities to develop a multi-cultural understanding and awareness of other cultures are more restricted. Younger pupils have completed some good examples of multi-cultural art but the focus of these was on the technical presentation and style. The school has an annual visit from a Kenyan school and there are visits to mosques and other religious buildings. However, the school could do more to prepare the pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



Pupils' welfare and well-being are safeguarded through the vigilance and good practice of staff. There are good policies in place that guide staff in their practice. The majority of these are implemented conscientiously. However, the policy for visits away from the school does not sufficiently reflect the guidance offered by the DfES. The school undertakes many such visits ranging in nature from a Ten Tors expedition to visits to local museums and factories.

The behaviour management system is firmly rooted in rewarding positive behaviours. Pupils are clear in their understanding of what they need to do in order to gain these rewards. Equally, they are clear about the consequences of not measuring up to the expectations of the school and its community. The school keeps appropriate records where misdemeanours are more serious. Pupils believe the discipline system to be fair.

The school is conscientious about procedures relating to child protection. Despite this the present

practice does not reflect the guidance offered by the DfES. The proprietor does however undertake an annual review of how these duties have been discharged. There is an anti-bullying policy, which meets requirements. While two in five pupils responding to the pupil questionnaire felt that the school does not deal effectively with this issue, this was not reflected in discussions with pupils or by the inspectors' observations. The school should consider including in its pupils' information pack clearer advice, in child-friendly terms, as to what pupils might do if they are the victims of bullying. Younger pupils at the Edington site are given a useful booklet in which some of this information is presented. This could usefully be expanded and copies given to pupils at the Shapwick site.

The school has put in place a good system to support pupils who may experience particular difficulties. These may be of a personal or academic nature. The system known as 'Pit stop' provides additional support to these pupils for as long as is thought necessary. The objective of this support is to enable them to fully return to the life of the school as soon as possible.

The school maintains an appropriate admission register. Attendance registers are completed satisfactorily. Teachers also make records of pupils' attendance at their lessons. Fire precautions are satisfactory and the school ensures that regular fire drills and maintenance checks of equipment are undertaken. However, the most recent visit by the local fire authority was in 2001. As a result of that visit the school put in place all of the report's recommendations. However, the school should arrange for a further visit by the fire authority in order to check that the premises are satisfactory.

First Aid training has been undertaken by a significant number of staff and medical kits are located at appropriately strategic locations throughout the school. As yet the school has not written a three-year access plan to address the requirements of the DDA.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets most but not all of the regulations.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

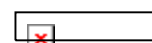
- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with the advice offered by the DfES (paragraph 3(2)(b));
- prepare and implement a written policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school which has regard to DfES guidance (paragraph 3(2)(c));and
- arrange for a visit by the fire authority to ensure that there is currently a satisfactory level of fire safety (Paragraph 3(5)(b)).

What does the school need to do to comply with the DDA?

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The two proprietors are also the governors of the school. The joint headmasters have separate responsibilities for the academic and pastoral areas of school life and complement each other very effectively. Staff are well qualified and appropriately deployed. All staff are checked through the

Criminal Records Bureau but the level of checking is inconsistent. Other checks for prospective employees are undertaken with the exception of medical fitness, which is not confirmed prior to appointment.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

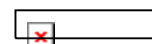
No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- carry out checks with the Criminal Records Bureau at a level appropriate for particular staff roles (paragraphs 4(c) and (d)); and
- check the medical fitness of all prospective employees before appointment (paragraph 4(b)).

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school is located on two sites, approximately five miles apart. The Edington site caters for pupils from 8 years of age to 13 years and the Shapwick site for pupils from 14 years of age to 18 years.

Extension and development of the premises and accommodation in recent years has resulted in good improvements, particularly for specialist subject teaching, as well as the boarding accommodation. There are plans for further development.

The teaching accommodation is appropriate for the numbers in the groups. It is very well maintained and on both sites provides an attractive and stimulating environment for teaching and learning. Attractive display promotes and celebrates the pupils' learning and achievements, both academically and socially.

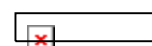
Specialist subject teaching accommodation on both sites is good. There are good facilities for physical education and these are used well, both for lessons and additional activities. There are social facilities for the prefects and for the sixth form which reflect the developing maturity and independence of the older pupils.

Boarding accommodation is provided in a number of houses, located on and off the sites of the school. The houses provide good quality residential accommodation.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school publishes an attractive, informative and readable brochure that accurately describes the

school and its work. There are, however, elements missing which are required. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated that they knew little about the school's complaints procedure. The school does not make it sufficiently clear to parents that they are entitled to some information and also that other information will be given on request. The requirements for this are listed below.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

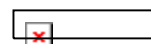
No

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- provide the school's address and telephone number and the names of the joint headteachers (paragraph 6(2)(a));
- provide the full name, usual residential address and telephone number of the school proprietor (paragraph 6(2)(b)); and
- provide particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e)).
- school should make it clear to parents that they may have the following information on request:
 - particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h));
 - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(2)(i));
 - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)); and
 - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



The school publishes a complaints procedure. However this does not comply with all regulations, in particular the requirements for a panel hearing and how this should be managed.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets most but not all of the regulations.

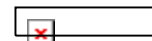
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that where parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 7(f));
- provide that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint there is provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 7(g)); and

- allow for parents to attend the panel hearing, and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 7(h)).

School details



Name of school:	Edington & Shapwick School
DfES ref number:	933/6173
Type of school:	Special day and boarding school
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	8 - 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 125, Girls 35, Total 160
Number of boarders:	Boys 88, Girls 24, Total 112
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 70, Girls 13, Total 83
Annual fees (day pupils):	£11,739 (Shapwick)
	£9,744 (Shapwick - sixth form)
Annual fees (boarders):	£11,220 (Edington)
	£17,070 (Shapwick)
	£14,391 (Shapwick - sixth form)
	£14,704 (Edington - weekly boarding)
Address of school:	£15,690 (Edington - termly boarding) Shapwick Manor Shapwick, Nr Bridgewater, Somerset TA7 9NJ
E-mail address:	shapwick@edingtonshapwick.co.uk
Telephone number:	01458 210384
Fax number:	01458 210111
Joint Headteachers:	Mr D C Walker (Curriculum)
Proprietor:	Mr J P Whittock (Pastoral)
Lead Inspector:	Shapwick Senior School Mr David Gardiner HMI
Dates of inspection:	7 - 10 February 2005