



Shirley High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101825
LEA Croydon LEA
Inspection number 276597
Inspection dates 24 May 2006 to 25 May 2006
Reporting inspector Stephen Long HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Shirley Church Road
School category	Foundation		Croydon
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		CR0 5EF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8656 9755
Number on roll	930	Fax number	020 8654 8507
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr K Bowen
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr J G Harker

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 24 May 2006 - 25 May 2006	Inspection number 276597
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Shirley High School is an average sized 11-16 foundation school. Specialist status for performing arts was awarded in September 2005 and building work on new facilities is underway. The school has partnerships with a number of other schools, for example as part of local 14-19 provision and in association with its performing arts activities.

The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. The local authority secondary hearing resource centre (HRC) is housed at the school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and who speak English as an additional language, is well above average although White-British pupils form the largest group. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school during the academic year is average. Staffing is stable overall and at senior level; however, there have been a number of changes in middle leadership in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that its overall effectiveness is good. Pupils achieve well at Shirley High school. They enter with average standards, reaching above average standards by the time they leave, although there is some variation between different subject areas. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as their peers. The school offers an inclusive environment which supports pupils in learning together. The pupils are well cared for and the progress of each is carefully monitored. Most of them enjoy their time at the school, are willing to take on responsibilities and make a contribution. The majority attend well, behave appropriately and have good attitudes to learning. They understand the need to lead safe and healthy lives, for example through eating sensibly and taking regular exercise.

Teaching at the school is good overall with some being outstanding. However, the turnover of staff in a minority of subjects has affected achievement although the situation is now stable. The majority of lessons are well planned and managed, enabling all pupils to make good progress. Effective feedback is provided by teachers, giving pupils a good understanding of how to improve. Nevertheless, the pupils do not all understand well enough how to assess their own progress and set their own targets. The school provides a good curriculum which it enriches through contacts with other local schools and, increasingly, through its specialist status. Appropriate provision is made for pupils to gain experience of the world of work and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and his colleagues. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and there is good capacity to go further. Monitoring and evaluation is accurate overall and underpins good planning for improvement. However more systematic attention should be paid to the impact made on pupils' achievement and their personal development when the school measures the progress it is making. Finances are well managed and the school offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- Reduce the inconsistencies in standards between subjects.
- Further develop pupils' involvement in setting their own targets for improvement.
- Ensure leaders and managers, at all levels, consistently judge the effectiveness of the school's work by its impact on pupils' achievement and their personal development and well-being.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average, achievement is good, and the pupils reach challenging targets. They join the school with average standards and make good overall progress

during their first three years. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average in English and mathematics; they are lower in science, but are in line with national expectations. Overall, standards have been above average and improving for the last four years. The 2005 results, particularly in mathematics and English, showed significantly faster improvement than that seen nationally.

By the end of Year 11 the pupils attain above average standards and the improvement seen continues to be faster than the national trend. The school has met its challenging targets consistently over recent years. The pupils make good progress with above average proportions gaining good grades in English and mathematics. However, there is some variation in pupils' performance across subjects. For example in 2005, results were significantly better than average in English literature and language, history and mathematics but weaker in modern foreign languages.

As a specialist school, ambitious targets are set for dance, drama and music and evidence indicates that appropriate progress is being made towards these.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with hearing impairment, achieve as well as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good with significant strengths in social and moral development. They show a clear understanding of responsibility, fairness and the need to make a contribution to the community, exemplified by their involvement in charity work and by older pupils acting as prefects. There is an active school council, which, for example, developed a school 'charter for respect'. Attendance is in line with the national average and pupils enjoy their time at school. They are courteous and mature in discussions. Most show positive attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school. A minority of pupils, however, lack sufficient independent learning skills and are overly reliant on the teachers to help them make progress in lessons. Pupils feel safe at school and report that the few instances of misbehaviour are dealt with promptly by staff. There is a strong sense of racial harmony and pupils value the positive relationships they have with members of staff. The pupils' cultural and spiritual development is good as a result of curriculum provision and opportunities for reflection provided in tutor time and assembly. They are aware of the need to stay safe and to adopt healthy lifestyles; a task force of pupils, staff, parents and governors has been established to monitor this aspect of school life. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and the performing arts. They develop a good understanding of what lies beyond school through vocational and other work-related courses.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with evidence of some outstanding practice. The teaching of drama and music is of high quality, contributing well to the school's performing arts status. The quality of teaching in a minority of subjects has been adversely affected by difficulties in recruiting and retaining good staff, although the situation is now stable.

The majority of teachers' planning makes good use of assessment data in order to meet all pupils' needs. Each pupil's progress is carefully tracked against the targets set. In most lessons, objectives are clearly stated and teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Activities and resources, including interactive whiteboards, are well managed and make a good contribution to learning. In the best lessons, challenging questions are used to engage pupils and to extend and test their understanding. Progress is slower in the minority of lessons where teachers talk for too long without getting pupils involved. The pupils enjoy lessons which offer a variety of ways to learn, responding particularly well to group and practical work where their good standards of behaviour enable them to make good progress.

Marking is regular with the majority giving good guidance for improvement. In most subjects pupils are involved in a measure of self-assessment and they know their current and target levels. However, they do not all have a clear understanding of how to assess their work against the appropriate criteria in order to take the initiative in setting their own targets.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs, including the gifted and talented and those for whom English is an additional language, is good. Support for the pupils in the HRC is good, and they are appropriately included in the life of the school as a whole.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the pupils' needs. A good range of courses is offered in Years 10 and 11. Additional learning opportunities are provided in partnership with other schools, including some for gifted and talented pupils. The school's specialist status has been well considered within the context of the community it serves. It is beginning to make a valuable contribution to the school's curriculum as well as offering opportunities for pupils from other schools to attend sessions.

Provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is effective in raising pupil achievement. This, together with work-related learning opportunities for older pupils, lays the groundwork well for their future economic well-being. The school makes good provision to help pupils stay safe, enjoy learning and lead healthy and meaningful lives. In some subjects such as personal, social and

health education, this work is carefully planned; however, the overall coordination and monitoring of its impact lacks clarity.

All pupils have access to a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. The school analyses participation rates for these but does not use the outcomes of its analysis to ensure all take part. Good links exist with outside organisations, for example pupils assist in local junior schools and the school drama club is contributing to a BBC radio project.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has rigorous and effective methods for the pupils' care, support and guidance. Child protection arrangements are secure and staff are trained appropriately. Attendance and punctuality are monitored well. Risk assessment procedures have been established, addressing an issue arising from the previous inspection. There is a strong pastoral system within the school and this supports the personal development and well-being of all pupils effectively. In particular, the induction programme for pupils transferring from primary school is comprehensive. Vulnerable pupils are supported and monitored well both within the school and through links with outside agencies. Nevertheless, there are some inconsistencies in how this is managed in different year groups and the school is establishing a more systematic approach to this work. The majority of pupils are well informed about choices of subject at GCSE and beyond, and about future career paths.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school provides an increasingly valuable resource for the community and makes effective links with other partners. It offers an inclusive environment for its pupils. Under the direction of the headteacher and his leadership colleagues the school has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards have risen and there is good capacity for further development.

Leaders and managers at all levels are committed to school improvement and undertake a wide range of worthwhile initiatives. For example, improvements in the use of assessment data are making a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and the school's specialist status is beginning to make a significant impact. The school's monitoring and evaluation processes yield an accurate overall understanding of strengths and areas requiring improvement. This is used well to underpin development planning and to set goals. In measuring its success, the school makes good reference to the standards reached by pupils. However, the analysis of the progress made by all groups of pupils, rather than the standards they reach, is not consistent at all levels. Inspection evidence demonstrates the effectiveness of the school's work to support pupils' personal development and well-being, but shows again that procedures for measuring the impact made, lack the sharp focus which offers the potential to drive improvement even faster.

The governors support and challenge the school well. They visit regularly, gathering a good range of evidence to monitor standards and the quality of provision. Financial management is robust and resources are deployed to good effect. Appropriate steps have been taken to ensure continuity of teaching in subject areas where recruitment and retention have been difficult. Effective support is provided to staff, for example to develop the work of middle managers. The school makes good efforts to communicate with parents and carers and to take account of their views. The majority of parents and carers believe that the school does a good job and provides a good standard of education.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

Thank you for taking part in your school's inspection. A large number of you took the time to speak to us both in and out of lessons and in meetings. This was very useful and enabled us to understand what you think about the school. This letter gives a summary of the school's main report.

We believe that your school is good and has the potential to improve further. The school offers you a broad range of subjects to study. It adds to these through working with other schools to offer courses for older pupils, and offers a good range of additional clubs and activities. The school's specialist status for performing arts has also added to what it can offer you and, from what you told us, you are looking forward to the new buildings being finished. Most of you work hard and make better overall progress than other pupils of your age. However, there are subjects where your progress is slower. You are taught by a good group of teachers who are committed to your success and are careful to check that each of you is achieving well. The school is well led by the headteacher and other senior staff. They have clear ideas as to how to improve things further. The majority of you told us you enjoy attending the school and feel safe and well cared for by the staff. You behave well both in and out of lessons. A good number of you take on additional responsibilities, for example acting as prefects or undertaking charity fundraising within your tutor groups.

Following the inspection we have asked the school to include some areas for improvement in its development planning. Two of these affect and involve you directly because they are about the way you approach your learning: * Try to work as hard in the subjects you find more difficult as those where you find it easier to succeed, so that you end up with a good spread of knowledge and understanding.* Take more responsibility for deciding how to improve your work in each subject so that you become more independent as learners. This is a valuable skill both for now and the future.

We enjoyed being in your school and wish you every success in the future.

Stephen Long

Her Majesty's Inspector