

Shevington High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106529
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	309155
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Garry Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	715
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Hadgraft
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Mackenzie
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2004
School address	Shevington Lane Shevington Wigan Lancashire WN6 8AB
Telephone number	01257 400990
Fax number	01257 400992

Age group	11-16
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Inspection number	309155

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the personal development of pupils; the effectiveness of pastoral care and academic guidance; and the impact of leadership and management at all levels, gathering evidence from lesson observations, meetings with pupils, staff and the chair of governors, observation of the daily running of the school and a review of documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school serving the community of Shevington to the north west of Wigan. The school serves an area with above average social and economic characteristics and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The majority of the school population is White British and there are few pupils who have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above that found nationally. The school has been a specialist college for technology since 1995. It has achieved the Investors in People award, the Work-Life Balance award, the Healthy Schools Award and the Artsmark Gold Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Shevington High School is a good school that is greatly valued by pupils and their parents. The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is good. The relationships between pupils and teachers are good and pupils generally behave well. Pupils report that they feel safe in school, that there is little bullying and that any incidents are usually dealt with efficiently and quickly. They enjoy lessons, especially in those subjects in which they are actively engaged in their learning, but some report that in a small number of lessons activities are not always sufficiently interesting. Their awareness of healthy lifestyles is good and pupils eat healthy food and eagerly engage in the good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the wider community, for example through charity fundraising and sporting activities. Pupils who earn citizenship awards, for example for charitable work or helping others, wear their badges proudly. Senior pupils take on positions of responsibility eagerly and some are attached to forms to support younger pupils. The school council also provides opportunities for pupils to participate in the development of the school.

This is an inclusive school that places a great emphasis on ensuring that all pupils are known well and supported effectively. The school provides outstanding pastoral care to its pupils and its emphasis on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable is exemplary. There is very effective liaison with primary schools to identify pupils who are likely to face difficulties in making the transition to secondary school. These pupils are supported exceptionally well within a 'diamond' nurture group that provides a programme of support in a centre within school. This support is greatly valued by pupils and they clearly enjoy the twice weekly lunch that is provided in the centre to extend social skills. In addition there is very good support for other pupils facing difficulties through the 'Shevington referral area' in which individual programmes are delivered effectively by pastoral teaching assistants. The school makes effective use of external support agencies when required and this is well coordinated. The personal development tutor for each form group very effectively fulfils the role of monitoring and supporting the well-being of each student and provides support and advice. They are also well supported by the pastoral assistants who monitor behaviour, punctuality and attendance regularly to identify pupils who require additional guidance. Academic guidance is good. All pupils have targets and the majority are well aware of them. The monitoring of progress towards targets is well established in Key Stage 4 and has recently been introduced to Key Stage 3 where tutors are eagerly taking on this role. In Key Stage 4 some pupils at risk of underachievement are provided with a learning mentor, but this is not yet in place for all pupils. Departments provide additional opportunities for pupils to extend their studies and address gaps in their work.

Pupils enter the school with standards that are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 so that overall standards were just above the national average in the national tests in 2006. In Key Stage 4 progress accelerates and pupils now consistently attain standards that are well above the national figures for the expected level of five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics at GCSE. Almost all pupils leave school with a recognised qualification. This represents good progress. The school sets challenging targets for pupils and all of the technology college targets have been achieved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress in line with their peers. Boys do not achieve as well as girls and a range of strategies to address this is being implemented.

The good achievement of pupils is the result of teaching that is good overall and the positive attitudes that pupils have to learning. Approaches to teaching have been broadened over recent years as a result of developments supported by the school's technology college status. Learning is well supported by the enhanced information and communication technology (ICT) resources available to staff and pupils, and a developing 'virtual learning' environment. However, a minority of teaching does not yet fully engage the interest of all pupils as it does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn in a range of ways. The school is focusing on the development of strategies to ensure that pupils are given regular feedback on how to improve their work, but this is not yet consistently applied in the marking of work by all staff.

The good achievement of pupils also reflects a curriculum that, using the additional resources of technology college status, has been designed carefully to meet their needs well. A range of options in Key Stage 4 allows pupils to choose from a good number of technology courses in addition to applied and traditional GCSEs. There is also a good range of opportunities for a number of pupils to access vocational education through local employers and colleges. Links with a local sixth form college allow some gifted pupils to access enrichment opportunities in science and others a higher level qualification in graphics. In addition the curriculum is enriched by a good range of sporting, musical and dramatic activities. The school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all. This is not only reflected in the internal provision for pupils, but in the curriculum enrichment provided to local primary schools and in the adult education opportunities offered within the school.

The school is exceptionally well led by an established headteacher who is ably supported by an extended senior leadership team. She has established a clear vision for the development of the school. Her commitment to involving all middle leaders in the evaluation and development of the school has resulted in a strong, shared commitment to improvement. The role of middle leaders in self-evaluation continues to develop well. There are very effective partnerships with other schools, providers of further education, employers, external agencies and the community to support the development of an extended school. There is a well established system for monitoring and evaluating that involves staff at all levels and the governing body. This results in good self-evaluation that accurately identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The process supports good planning for improvement, in which the school is taking an increasingly long term strategic approach to developments. A small proportion of the parents who responded to the Ofsted survey feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their views, but an independent survey confirms that this is a minority view. The procedures for ensuring the health and safety and safeguarding of young people meet current government guidelines. The school is supported by an effective governing body. The chair of governors attends the senior leadership team meeting on a regular basis and the governing body has reviewed its committee structure to ensure that it is well placed to continue to challenge the school to improve. The school has a strong record of improvement and the clear strategic thinking of the senior leadership team together with the well founded plans for improvement illustrate an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils consistently receive clear advice on how to improve through regular comments on their marked work.
- Ensure that the quality of all teaching reflects best practice within the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I recently inspected your school. I enjoyed talking to you about your work and listening to your views on the school. You told me that you thought Shevington is a good school and I agree.

The staff in the school know you well and there are outstanding systems for ensuring that you are given all the support you need. This is particularly strong for those of you who face difficulties when first arriving at the school or during later years. As a result you develop well as confident young people, attend school regularly and behave well. You contribute well to the development of the school and the wider community.

You make good progress in your studies and by the time you leave school achieve standards that are well above those in most other schools. You enjoy most of your lessons because teaching is usually good. You are given good advice on how to improve your work, especially in Years 10 and 11, although some marking could give you clearer advice on how to improve further. You have a good range of courses to study in Years 10 and 11 and some of you are fortunate to have opportunities to follow vocational courses with local employers and colleges. There is a good range of sporting and other activities for you to do in your free time.

The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and her senior colleagues, and all staff and the governors contribute well to providing you with a good education. The school has clear plans for how it is going to improve further.

I have asked them to ensure that teachers share the very best approaches so that all of your lessons can be as good as the best. You can help them by telling them how you learn best. I have also asked all teachers to include advice, when required, on how you can improve in their comments on your work. You can help to improve your standards even further by following this advice.