

Edington and Shapwick School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	9336173
Unique Reference Number	123929
Inspection number	322066
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Edington and Shapwick School is a specialist day and boarding school which provides education for pupils with specific learning difficulties (SpLD), which includes dyslexia and dyspraxia. It opened in 1974 and occupies two sites approximately five miles apart in villages near Bridgwater in Somerset. Education is provided on the Edington site for pupils aged 8 to 13 years and on the Shapwick site for pupils aged 14 to 18 years. The school is approved by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and currently 148 pupils are on roll aged between 8 and 18 years. Almost half of the pupils have a statement of special educational need (SEN) and about one third attend as day pupils. They come from homes throughout England and Wales. Most places are privately funded with just under half being funded by pupils' local authorities. The school has recently changed ownership to become part of Kedleston (UK), a private company which owns other similar schools. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2005 and by Ofsted's Children's Directorate in January 2008.

Through providing specialised support within a *'warm family ethos'* the school aims to *'help those who suffer, discover that success, self-esteem and achievement are things they can win for themselves'*.

Evaluation of the school

Edington and Shapwick School provides a good quality of education and care. The school is successful in achieving its central aims to increase pupils' self-confidence and to ensure they experience success. Good teaching, supported by an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities ensures pupils enjoy school and make good progress. The work in the boarding houses makes a significant contribution to promoting pupils' independence. Since the last inspection the school has extended and improved facilities for teaching and learning. It meets all the educational and most of the organisational regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good and is designed to meet the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties. Pupils are provided with a broad range of subjects which is based on the National Curriculum. All pupils study at least seven GCSE

courses and post-16 students mainly attend a local college where they receive a broad programme, which includes a good range of A level courses. Planning is thorough and ensures continuity in provision between the two sites. There is an appropriate personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Some PSHE topics are included in religious education (RE) lessons and in tutorial sessions, whilst a specialist from the local area health authority visits to teach sex education. Aspects of citizenship are not covered systematically. The school recognises this and has plans to timetable PSHE and citizenship as discrete subjects from September 2008. The school reviews its curriculum regularly and makes suitable changes to improve the quality of education; for example it has introduced a new sports qualification and organised single sex classes for science.

The requirements of pupils' statements of SEN are met fully. Individual and small group work is carefully targeted to support the development of pupils' literacy, co-ordination and social skills. This work is effectively supported by speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. Pupils receive suitable careers guidance from the Connexions service and those in Year 11 visit the local college to help prepare them for moving into the sixth form. A satisfactory programme of visits to local businesses is in place to promote awareness of the workplace.

The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of extra curricular clubs and sporting activities which includes athletics, cricket, football, rugby, chess, climbing, information and communication technology (ICT) and origami. Both boys and girls are fully involved. Residential trips, for example to London, Greece and Italy, geography field trips and day visits to local places of interest are thoughtfully planned to maximise learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment ranges from satisfactory to outstanding and is good overall. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and possess a firm understanding of how to teach pupils who have dyslexia. Lessons are well planned and contain a good range of activities. The use of visual prompts, practical activities and carefully designed worksheets helps to capture pupils' interest. High expectations, together with regular praise and encouragement, ensures a calm and productive atmosphere in lessons. ICT is used effectively to develop pupils' literacy skills and to help them present their ideas. There are few opportunities in lessons for pupils to work collaboratively and to discuss their ideas with each other. This limits pupils' progress in developing their speaking and listening skills.

The school conducts a good range of assessment tests to confirm pupils' specific difficulties on entry to the school and to check subsequent progress. Given their starting points, pupils make good progress, especially in literacy. Pupils typically gain between six and eight GCSE passes, many at a high grade. Results in art and design and in design and technology (DT) are consistently outstanding each year. Pupils also speak proudly of their sporting achievements, sometimes at county or national level, and of their success in matches against other, often larger schools.

The school does not have in place a system for monitoring teaching and learning. This limits the sharing of best practice and results in some inconsistency between classes, for example in the use of assessment information to plan lessons.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' personal development is good. The school works assiduously to develop in each pupil a sense of their value as an individual and to foster a growing belief in their capacity to achieve. Pupils' self-esteem is raised when they participate in challenging activities, for example the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Ten Tors Challenge. The school celebrates achievement and pupils appreciate the recognition of their efforts through the awarding of house points, merit ties and rewards.

The school's positive ethos underpins pupils' outstanding behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils of different ages made it clear in discussions that they enjoy being at this school and rate their teachers highly. Their good levels of attendance are a testimony to this. 'I just feel happy!' was a typical view expressed by one pupil.

Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. In RE younger pupils learn about major world faiths developing an understanding of the values and beliefs of other cultures. This provides a sound basis for work in ethics and PSHE which effectively helps pupils to think about serious issues in today's world. PSHE includes aspects of citizenship and helps pupils to gain knowledge of public institutions and services in British society. Social and cultural development is further enriched through regular visits to theatres and galleries.

Pupils are able to cooperate and communicate effectively and readily support each other, as an excellent year 10 assembly on '*Food Waste*' clearly exemplified. The responsibility given to pupils through the prefect and mentoring systems encourages them to extend their obligations and duties to others. The school council at Edington flourishes, with pupils showing increasing responsibility and maturity through the duties they undertake and the improvements they make. The council at Shapwick has not functioned this year and in their responses to the questionnaire, a number of pupils expressed the view that they had too few opportunities for involvement in decision making. Careers education and work experience contribute to older pupils' understanding of life in the workplace and how their individual skills and preferences might guide future career choices.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare health and safety is good. The care of pupils is a priority for the school and is of good quality. The staff have good relationships with pupils, contributing to an ethos in which pupils feel valued and safe. Staff in the boarding houses work closely with colleagues in school to promote pupils' welfare and

achievement. Child protection and other policies required to support pupils' wellbeing are in place and regularly reviewed. In discussions, younger pupils reported there was no bullying and older ones expressed the view that any occasional bullying was dealt with effectively. General risk and fire risk assessments are diligently carried out and fire-fighting equipment is regularly tested and serviced by a specialist company.

Staying safe and aspects of food, diet and healthy eating are explored in PSHE and science. The importance of exercise as part of healthy living is developed through a highly effective programme of sports, athletics and recreational activities. The avoidance of potential dangers to health from smoking and illegal drugs is understood by pupils.

The admission and attendance registers meet regulatory requirements. The school has a plan to improve access for disabled users and meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school meets almost all of the regulations. All staff have been subject to clearance at an enhanced level with the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure they are suitable to work with children. References are followed up prior to appointment and the school has recently established a single register to record this information as required. The school has not made checks to confirm the medical fitness of staff prior to appointment, although there are plans in place to introduce them.

School's premises and accommodation

Classrooms and boarding houses provide a safe environment and are maintained to a satisfactory standard. Attractive displays are used to support learning. Boarding provision is located in both main buildings and additional houses located in the villages.

Teaching accommodation at Shapwick is located in three main buildings separated by a short walk. Classrooms are of suitable size for the numbers of pupils using them and a range of withdrawal rooms are provided for literacy tuition and speech and language therapy or occupational therapy. There is a small library and specialist classrooms support the teaching of practical subjects such as science, art, ICT and DT. A sports hall, all weather tennis courts and a playing field provide good facilities for PE, games and recreation.

At the Edington site classrooms are of a good size with additional specialist rooms for teaching science, ICT and DT. A playground and sports fields provide ample space for outside play.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides most of the required information for parents, carers and others. Parents hold positive views of the school and receive regular reports which give detailed information on pupils' progress. Some details of the organisation of the school have changed recently due to the new ownership and the school is currently amending the information it provides for parents to reflect this.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a complaints policy that is made available to all parents. It is updating this policy which currently meets most but not all of the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff carry out checks to confirm their medical fitness (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the address and telephone number of the proprietor's registered or principal office (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- ensure that parents are aware they can request details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j))
- where a pupil who is registered at the school is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, submit an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that student to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 6(7)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that if 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))

- ensure 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)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

Establish a system for monitoring teaching and learning so that the best practice can be shared across the school.

School details

Name of school	Edington and Shapwick School		
DCSF number	9336173		
Unique reference number	123929		
Type of school	Day and boarding		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1974		
Age range of pupils	8-18		
Gender of pupils	MI		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 108	Girls: 40	Total: 148
Number of boarders	Boys: 68	Girls: 24	Total: 92
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 47	Girls: 14	Total: 61
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,115		
Annual fees (boarders)	£20,268		
Address of school	Shapwick Manor Shapwick Bridgwater Somerset TA7 9NJ		
Telephone number	01278722012		
Fax number	01278723312		
Email address	shapwick@edingtonshapwick.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr D Walker		
Proprietor	Kedleston (UK)		
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI		
Dates of inspection	13 - 14 May 2008		