

Shaftesbury House School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134130
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	328835
Inspection date	22 September 2008
Reporting inspector	John Atkinson

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs E Lavery
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Clark
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
School address	Stratford Road Chorley Lancashire PR6 0AF
Telephone number	01257 516067
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Shaftesbury House School caters for pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools. It also manages two intervention programmes for pupils requiring support to help maintain their mainstream placement. Key Stage 3 pupils who have been permanently excluded are based at the My Future Matters centre at Worden Sports College. Key Stage 4 pupils are based at Shaftesbury House School which provides education on site with vocational and educational training provided off site in partnership with a range of other organisations. The vast majority of pupils have had prior negative experiences of education, a high proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a few have a statement of special educational need because of their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The pupils are predominantly White British and no pupil speaks English as an additional language. A very small number of pupils are in public care. Attainment on entry is well below average for their ages because many pupils have missed a considerable amount of schooling through poor attendance and/or exclusion from mainstream schools. Approximately a quarter of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Shaftesbury House is a good school that has made significant progress since its last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. It is very effectively led and managed, resulting in a positive ethos where pupils feel well supported. It is a good example of how different agencies work collaboratively with a shared commitment to helping pupils overcome their difficulties. Pupils' enjoyment of, and participation in, the wide range of available opportunities contrasts sharply with their previous negative experiences and responses and demonstrates how much they have grown in self-confidence. Parents and carers readily acknowledge the impact of the centre in improving their children's behaviour, attitude and achievements. As one parent commented: 'My daughter enjoys everything that is put forward to her and attends every day.'

The good leadership of the headteacher and the senior leadership team is key to maintaining the hugely positive ethos in which pupils and staff feel individually valued and respected. The leadership's commitment to providing a high quality learning environment and an individualised curriculum is very strong and gives pupils and parents a clear sense of choice, purpose and ambition. The desire to provide the best for emotionally vulnerable young people with additional behavioural and social difficulties is very evident in all aspects of the school's work. The outcome is that pupils make good personal progress in behaving more sensibly and maturely, take learning seriously, and begin to realise their potential.

Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils enjoy their learning and apply themselves conscientiously. Key Stage 4 pupils make particularly good progress because of their mature attitudes, sensible behaviour and desire to do well. Over half of the pupils achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A* to G in 2008, which is far better than was expected when they first joined the school. This is a direct outcome of the staff's high expectations, intensive support and positive encouragement. Teachers assess pupils regularly and use the information to set clear learning targets, but do not involve pupils enough in this process. Teachers and support staff have excellent relationships with pupils and work very effectively in teams to improve pupils' work habits, resulting in a resilient approach to course work and the meeting of deadlines.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are very good because of the good provision for their care, guidance and support. Links with other agencies are very effective and staff work collaboratively to address the specific needs and complex circumstances of vulnerable pupils. Pupils develop more positive attitudes, display considerable improvements in their behaviour and show greater belief in their own abilities. The school's calm and relaxed ethos is supported with clear rules and boundaries that make pupils feel safe, secure and at ease in sharing any anxieties and problems. The school provides a good diet for pupils, makes extensive efforts to inform pupils about the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse, and ensures that pupils engage in a wide range of physical activities. Attendance is satisfactory for the majority of pupils and this is a very significant improvement on the poor attendance of most pupils in their previous schools.

The curriculum is good and the school is very effective in giving an excellent level of choice leading to all pupils following a very personalised programme of learning. The range of subjects offered at GCSE level is much wider than that which was available at the last inspection. This is matched by appropriate vocational courses that are very popular and motivating for pupils. However, pupils do not sufficiently develop the skills gained from these courses because the opportunities for work experiences are very limited. The curriculum is enriched with additional

opportunities in sport, the arts and outdoor education that broaden pupils' horizons and increase their engagement with learning. The outcome is that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflected in the pupils' improved levels of tolerance and respect for difference and each other's personal circumstances.

Leadership and management are good in all aspects of the school's provision, including the off-site intervention programmes. The effective leadership of the two eight-week intervention programmes for pupils in mainstream schools has led to a substantial reduction in exclusions and increased level of inclusion for those pupils who attend the My Future Matters and It's about Me projects. Senior staff are effective managers who ensure the rigorous application of procedures to assess new pupils and the consistent implementation of routines to manage and change behaviour. Subject leadership has improved considerably in recent years, resulting in higher standards of attainment, detailed curriculum planning and clear action plans to address new initiatives. However, subject leaders do not yet track the rate of progress of pupils against their targets to ensure that additional support is matched to those in greatest need. The management committee is effective in supporting and challenging the headteacher in promoting a high quality personalised education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide appropriate work experience placements for all Key Stage 4 pupils.
- Ensure that subject leaders regularly track pupils' progress towards their targets.
- Involve pupils in the process of setting their learning targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Boys and girls on all sites make good progress and, taking account of prior attainment, achieve well. The majority of pupils join the school with a history of underachievement and/or disruption, indifferent attitudes towards learning, poor attendance and a lack of self-confidence. In Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) based upon their initial assessments on joining the school. The good progress in these key skills enables them to make good progress in other subjects such as history, art and personal, social and health education.

By the end of Year 11, pupils achieve well in GCSEs and Entry Level courses in a good number of subjects and in a wide range of other accredited vocational courses. In 2008, 82% of pupils attained 2 or more GCSEs grade A* to G and 53% of pupils attained 5 or more GCSEs at grade A* to G. These results exceed previous expectations. Pupils achieve particularly well in vocational courses in construction and motor mechanics. Successes in preparation for work courses show the enormous progress that pupils make in learning new skills that give them access to a variety of options when they reach school leaving age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Overall, pupils' personal development is good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils become more confident about their abilities, regain their enthusiasm for learning and show much greater self-control with their behaviour. As a result, they become more socially skilled, enjoy good relationships with staff and pupils alike and join in activities with positive attitudes. Pupils eat healthily at school and regularly take part in physical exercise.

The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme actively develops their understanding of healthy lifestyles and the outcome is that pupils are well informed about the choices they can make for themselves. Staff act as good role models for pupils and this leads to huge improvements in pupils' enjoyment of school and their attendance rates. Pupils feel very safe at school, are confident that they can share any worries or anxieties with staff and become better at resolving their own problems and difficulties. The emphasis on attaining a good level of key skills, particularly ICT skills, and having opportunities to work in teams and show initiative, is very good preparation for their future prospects in education, employment or training.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with pupils and work effectively as a team to ensure that pupils receive sufficient support to overcome many of their difficulties. Lessons are well planned and structured and tasks are pitched at the appropriate level. As a result pupils enjoy lessons, work hard and are keen to do well. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and standards of work, assess pupils regularly and set clear learning targets. However, they do not involve pupils sufficiently in this process. Classrooms are well organised with stimulating displays and a positive ethos creates a good climate for learning. Praise and rewards are used effectively to recognise effort, progress and achievements. Staff mark pupils' work very thoroughly and clear advice is given on what pupils need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and its enrichment are good. The high level of personal choice from a wide range of relevant courses is a significant strength of the school and key to improving pupils' enjoyment of, and motivation for, learning. The access to accredited vocational courses in Key Stage 4 gives pupils the opportunities to achieve qualifications that many had lost hope of achieving. As a result, pupils gain a real sense of purpose that enables them to recognise the opportunities for further training, education and employment. However, there are insufficient work experience opportunities to build on the skills acquired through these courses.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a safe and caring school where the ethos is underpinned with very good relationships and pupils feel valued and respected. Parents feel their children are achieving and behaving much better than in their previous schools. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are very thorough and this means that the most vulnerable or at risk pupils are quickly identified and supported. Child protection arrangements and those to ensure everyone's health, welfare and safety are in place. Pupils receive very good guidance about how to improve their behaviour and attitudes. Teachers are very encouraging when they mark pupils' work and give clear guidance as to how it could be improved. Pupils have good access to individual counselling to address personal worries and problems.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior leadership team lead the school with energy and a clear sense of purpose. They have driven the improvements since the last inspection and, as a result, there is a personalised curriculum and a positive ethos where pupils feel supported and motivated to do well. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. The management committee is involved well in the strategic direction and monitoring of the school. The morale of the staff is high and there is a good capacity to improve. Subject leaders have improved the quality of planning and the standards that pupils attain, but they do not systematically track pupils' progress towards their targets. The school gives good value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 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?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

23 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shaftesbury House School, Lancashire, PR6 0AF

I enjoyed the day that I recently spent in the school and want to thank you for making me welcome, sharing your opinions about how the school has helped you and showing me your work. I was pleased and impressed by the fact that many of you were now doing so much better in your school work as a result of the help and support given by the staff at Shaftesbury House school. Many of you told me how you had improved your behaviour and attitudes and were knuckling down to hard work to get good examination results.

I agree with your views that the school is good and the staff are helpful and easy to get on with. It was very clear how much the staff want you to do your very best. You have really good opportunities to gain experience of different work skills and your commitment to doing well was obvious. The school has many strengths:

- staff treat you as individuals and help you to improve in learning, attendance and behaviour;
- you are given a very good choice of different subjects and vocational courses;
- staff have high expectations of you and you want to succeed in examinations;
- the headteacher is totally committed to getting the very best for you.

I think that you can help yourselves and the school by continuing with your very positive attitudes and hard work. It is really important that you make the most out of the opportunities that school provides for you because then you can achieve well and go on to do well in the future. I have suggested that the school can improve further by:

- giving all Key Stage 4 pupils opportunities to have work experience;
- involving you in the setting of your targets;
- monitoring your progress towards your targets in all subjects.

I hope you carry on working hard all year and are successful with your examinations at the end of the year.

Yours sincerely

John Atkinson

Lead inspector