

Shavington High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111420
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	337683
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Jon Lovgreen

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 of pupils on the school roll	749
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Simon
Headteacher	Mr Robert Knight
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
School address	Rope Lane Shavington Crewe CW2 5DH
Telephone number	01270 685111
Fax number	01270 661305
Email address	rknight@shavington.cheshire.sch.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2010
Inspection number	337683

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons taught by different teachers. They spent a total of 15 hours in the classroom and held meetings with governors and various groups of staff and students, including members of the school council. Extensive meetings took place with senior leaders and there were also meetings with local authority and school improvement officers. Inspectors observed the school's work, touring the school on two occasions to look at general behaviour and attitudes. Students' work in books and files was sampled. Inspectors looked at the school's systems for tracking students' progress and monitoring the work of the school, minutes of meetings, various relevant policies, and questionnaire returns from staff, some students and 77 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

standards and achievement in English and mathematics, and the progress being made by boys of average ability and more-able girls

the quality of teaching and marking

the effectiveness of strategies to improve attendance and behaviour

the extent to which the curriculum matches the needs and interests of all students

whether leaders at different levels check the school's work regularly and thoroughly enough to spot where change is needed, and to plan improvements effectively.

Information about the school

Shavington High School is smaller than average in size. The vast majority of students are of White British backgrounds. Few students do not have English as their first language. The proportion of students entitled to a free school meal is lower than average. The proportions with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and with a statement of special educational need, match the national picture. The numbers of students joining or leaving the school other than at year end is relatively high. Shavington is in its fourth year as a specialist science school with mathematics as a subsidiary subject. Other awards include the Inclusion Quality Mark, Investors in People, the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Award, National Healthy Schools Award and the International Schools Intermediate Award.

At the time of the inspection four staff, including the headteacher, were long-term absentees. A reduced and restructured leadership team was being led by the acting headteacher.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Shavington High School is a satisfactory school. It has made reasonable progress on the issues raised during the last inspection. A slow initial response has accelerated recently. During the past two terms, school leaders have analysed more closely what the priorities for improvement are. Sensible and practical strategies have been devised to accelerate progress. Long-term staff absence, including that at senior level, has affected the capacity of senior leaders to make good progress on all fronts and to ensure that agreed policies are consistently applied. But it has not weakened their resolve. In difficult times the sterling efforts of those running the school should not be underestimated. The smaller, restructured leadership team is coping well. The leadership and determination of the acting headteacher have been crucial.

Standards in examinations and tests rose in the summer of 2009. However, the school has been alert to the need to get more boys to the important threshold of gaining five A* to C passes in GCSE, including in English and mathematics. Improved and better shared data on students' progress and extra sessions for some students are proving effective in addressing potential underachievement. However, many students remain willing rather than enthusiastic workers. Teachers plan lessons methodically, but do not look for opportunities to intrigue and fascinate students. Students work steadily but their concentration levels vary. This means that progress is rarely good. On occasions, when classroom management is not consistent, misbehaviour and cheekiness can occur.

The school has made effective use of its science specialism to raise standards, both in science and across the school. It has also been used to stimulate curriculum changes. These have been well planned and managed, not least in using links with other schools and colleges to broaden the number and type of courses open to students. The influence and impact of the second specialism, mathematics, has been less strong, but students are at last making satisfactory progress in the subject. The level of support and guidance which students receive is good. They are well known as individuals and the school takes care to respond to and provide for their varying needs, both in terms of their personal development and their academic progress.

Rising standards, a focus on key areas, such as performance in English and mathematics, and increased attendance all show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Clearer identification of issues and more determined strategies are behind this. Senior leaders have a better idea of how, and how often, to evaluate aspects of performance and most judgements are insightful and accurate. However, at present, the leadership team does not have the capacity to regularly and rigorously check that what was planned and agreed is, in fact, happening in practice.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that middle ability boys make steadier progress and reach higher standards.
- Increase the proportion of good lessons by ensuring:
 - that teachers share their enthusiasm with students
 - the better use of brisk discussion to explore and extend students' understanding
 - that students work with more urgency and greater focus on the task in hand.
- Raise standards of behaviour by ensuring:
 - that all staff adhere to behaviour management strategies
 - higher expectations of students' effort and cooperation in lessons.
- Improve the consistency and rigour with which policies and procedures are put into practice through:
 - clearer communication of what is expected of staff and students
 - sharper criteria for measuring progress with initiatives
 - an increase in the capacity of the leadership team to carry out its responsibilities.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students are making satisfactory progress. In most lessons there is a calm and productive atmosphere. Students are diligent but not often enthusiastic workers, and they still rely too much on teachers for ideas and direction in their work. The vast majority happily do as they are asked, but see much work as a task to be done rather than as an exciting opportunity to learn and take part. Nonetheless, they are learning new skills in a methodical way, such as how to use computers and their literacy skills to benefit work in other subjects. This is helping to narrow the gaps between the performance of different groups. The more careful planning of how to provide the sort of experiences which will encourage more-able girls means that they are more consistently achieving the higher levels and grades of which they are capable. Boys of average ability make variable progress because a number are diffident about work or lack confidence in their abilities. Those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to keep pace with their classmates. Nurture groups, effective support by classroom assistants, and careful review of how they progress against exact targets, bring this about.

In 2009, examination results showed an improvement on those of the previous two years. In terms of overall attainment, students did better than the national average, continuing a trend of improvement. Whilst the results in mathematics and English

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

matched the national average, too few students gained C grades or above in GCSE in both subjects. As a result, the school fell a long way short of reaching its ambitious targets. More careful analysis of students' progress through the school and during each year is leading to better-informed targets. There is secure evidence that the school is on track to reach its appropriately amended targets this year.

Last year's decline in students' attendance has been successfully reversed. This has been achieved by stressing the link between good attendance and success at school, and more rapid communication with parents and carers. There have been fewer exclusions because of some decline in incidents of serious misbehaviour. However, senior managers accept that more could be done about the low-level disruption which is a feature of some lessons. Students have responded to the efforts to make healthy food more quickly and readily available at lunchtime. A good proportion take part in the wide and imaginative range of physical activities on offer. Through prefect and 'buddy' roles, and work as school councillors and sport coaches in primary schools students are able to make an active contribution. Some charity work and placements in care homes for the elderly or vulnerable also extend students' experiences of working to help others.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory but too few lessons deeply engage and enthuse students. Teachers plan lessons methodically, using their secure subject knowledge and awareness of students' abilities to plan suitable tasks. Classes are usually well managed and relationships are generally good. Where this is not the case, behaviour can deteriorate. A small minority of students become cheeky and unhelpful. Teachers do not consistently use agreed systems to tackle this. In typical lessons the aim of the work being set is explained clearly. When teaching is good, this is linked to how students can show the skills needed to succeed. Teachers plan a range of activities, but these vary in their briskness and in the level of attention students are expected to give. In a successful media studies lesson, students were given tight time schedules to evaluate newspaper layouts, redesign them for a younger audience, and then explain, discuss and mark their efforts in pairs. In such circumstances students enjoy working and come up with original ideas, which are well expressed. However, teachers generally miss opportunities to intrigue and stimulate students' thinking and efforts. Oral work is often limited and superficial, and students do not always feel that their contributions are valued. Students appreciate the importance of written work and final pieces are often completed neatly and well. However, in class, the frequency of casual social chatter shows that some students lack that sense of urgency and concentration which would benefit their efforts. Marking is regular but variable in its helpfulness because not all teachers follow potentially good and agreed systems.

Careful planning for what will help students most has enabled the school to develop a good curriculum. Skills sessions for students in Key Stage 3, the 'Imagination Curriculum', and intensive support in literacy and numeracy skills for students who find these more difficult are all effective. In Key Stage 4, the school offers a wide range of options. These include extended science options, vocational courses, diplomas, apprenticeships, and AS level and extended research opportunities for those who successfully pass GCSE courses early. As a result, students generally are gaining more qualifications at a higher standard and are suitably prepared to move on to college or employment.

Students and parents and carers appreciate the quality of advice and support available to them. Most students settle quickly into Year 7 because of good liaison between schools, not least in visits to and fro to study 'fun' forensic science topics. A residential opportunity and induction visits are also beneficial. Vulnerable students gain in confidence because they are identified early and get detailed yet sensitive support. Specialists in school, such as the learning mentor, counsellor, careers adviser and school nurse are well regarded and complement the work of outside agencies. Senior leaders are aware that more could be made of the time devoted to form periods if the focus in them shifted from administrative tasks to students' guidance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

A depleted but keen leadership group is working with energy and determination. Recent restructuring has resulted in better use of expertise, and clearer responsibility and accountability. Where monitoring of the school's work takes place it is accurate and valuable. The school has a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses and an increasingly clear understanding of how to tackle the latter. Some recent developments in analysing and using data about students' progress, identifying those at risk of underachievement, and providing extra coaching and examinations for some Year 11 students, are well thought through. 'Mini reviews' of departments, are crisp in their analysis, showing an increased expectation of what can and should be achieved. Time restrictions mean that checking on the quality of classroom teaching and students' attitudes have had less attention and the school is over-optimistic about these. Similarly, some agreed policies, for instance, on behaviour management and marking, have not been checked rigorously enough. The result is that teachers do not consistently work to them. Regular 'Raising attainment' meetings help sustain momentum in the drive to raise standards. The new team of governors get more precise information about school performance. This, allied to training they have undertaken, has helped them to begin to influence the school's direction whilst checking its progress.

Newsletters, parents' and carers' information evenings, and more information being sent home about attendance and progress are helping to engage families in the work of the school. The use of partnerships, especially with other schools and colleges, to extend courses on offer at Key Stage 4, is good. Work in science with partner primary schools is also effective. Safeguarding procedures meet all current government requirements. The school successfully promotes tolerance and understanding amongst students and promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily so that the gaps in students' academic performance are narrowing. Students have an informed understanding of their local community and a sound idea of the diverse religions and cultures which make up the world today. However, their horizons remain narrow. Apart from some charity work and students' placements in the community, their experiences of other cultures within and beyond the United Kingdom are limited.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are generally positive about the school and supportive of it. They feel that their child enjoys school and is well looked after. They also comment on how well the school caters for students' differing needs, both personal and academic. A minority of parents and carers have four concerns. They feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions and that they do not get enough information for them to assist their child's learning. Inspectors feel that whilst the system for reports and parents' and carers' evenings is good, the absence of key staff is temporarily hampering the speed and clarity of some communication. Inspectors share parents' and carers' concerns at the amount of extended staff absence. This is having an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and on the school's ability to make quick progress on some issues, because the leadership team is stretched. Parents and carers comment, as do some of their children, on levels of misbehaviour. Inspectors did not come across serious misbehaviour and judge overall behaviour to be satisfactory. However, within that picture, they saw instances where some students were allowed to work and behave too casually and were not corrected quickly and firmly enough by teachers. The small minority of students, who answer back and argue about the smallest issue, or who smoke on the premises, do not reflect the attitudes of the large majority.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shavington High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 749 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	25	53	69	2	3	3	4
The school keeps my child safe	12	16	57	74	5	6	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	31	43	56	9	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	23	47	61	10	13	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	13	17	47	61	12	16	3	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	5	49	64	18	23	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	10	53	69	9	12	2	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	14	54	70	8	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	25	43	56	6	8	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	10	48	62	10	13	7	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	8	42	55	15	19	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	13	17	32	42	15	19	7	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	34	38	49	8	10	3	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Shavington High School, Crewe, CW2 5DH

Following our recent inspection of your school, I am writing to let you know what we found. Firstly, let me thank you for your courtesy and helpfulness to us. Your willingness to talk about school and your work was very useful. We especially appreciated those who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk to us.

Yours is a satisfactory school which is improving steadily. The standards you reach both in lessons and in tests and examinations have improved, as has your attendance. However, too many boys of average ability still lag behind in producing the work of which they are capable. You have a clear idea of the level of your work and what your targets are. Teachers are increasingly giving you clear advice about how to improve, but more need to do this in the agreed way of 'What went well' and 'Even better if'. Most lessons are well managed and interesting, but teachers are realising that they need to get you more involved and enthusiastic about what you are learning. You could play your part by taking a more active part in class and group discussion and concentrating harder when you are doing written work. The good behaviour of most of you contrasts with the casual and, at times, cheeky behaviour of others. You are well looked after in school and get good advice about options and moving on to college or work. As you appreciate, you are fortunate to be in a specialist science college. The range of options and diploma courses alongside the 'Imagination Curriculum' in the lower school are providing you with good opportunities to learn.

A lot of staff absence is putting pressure on other teachers at the moment. Be patient. Work with them to get through a testing time when they are trying to improve things and get the best for you. We have asked the leadership team and governors to concentrate on four things to accelerate improvement. These are: helping middle ability boys to make quicker progress; increasing the number of lessons that are really interesting and get the best from you; improving your behaviour and keenness to learn; and making sure that plans and ideas which have been agreed are carried through into school life by all staff.

My best wishes to you all for your future success and happiness.

Yours sincerely

Jon Lövgreen
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.