

# Shotton Hall School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114314
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	338337
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernard Campbell HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1149
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Roy Simpson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ian Mowbray
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Waveney Road Peterlee County Durham SR8 1NX
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5862580
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5861328
<b>Email address</b>	shottonhall.school@durhamlea.org.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 36 lessons, held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school improvement plan, the school's monitoring records and safeguarding documentation. They also took account of questionnaires from 551 parents or carers, 62 staff and a sample of 150 students.

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

- the attainment and progress in different subjects and by different groups of students
- the impact of leadership and management in inspiring and driving improvement
- the effectiveness of the curriculum and care, guidance and support in meeting the range of students' needs
- the quality of teaching and assessment.

## Information about the school

Shotton Hall School is a larger than average school with few minority ethnic students. A high proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities, although the proportion requiring a statement of special educational need is average. The proportion eligible for free school meals is well above average. It is a specialist college for performing arts. The school has the Investors in People and Investors in Children awards and the Healthy Schools award.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Shotton Hall is an outstanding school where every child matters. All groups of students enjoy their learning and make outstanding progress. The performing arts specialism is at the heart of the school and makes an outstanding contribution to the school's ethos and its relationships with parents and the wider community.

Attainment has improved significantly over the last three years. Almost all students now gain five good GCSEs. In 2009, GCSE results were high in science, average in English and below average in mathematics. Early GCSE examinations results in the current Year 11 show great improvement in mathematics and continued improvement in English. The school has identified the need to further increase the proportion gaining GCSE A and A\* grades and to ensure that all subjects perform at the national average or higher.

Students demonstrate exceptional rates of progress due to the number and range of qualifications gained and because of their rapid pace of learning in English and science. All groups of students make outstanding progress, including boys, girls, those eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teaching and the use of assessment are outstanding. The rigour and consistency of assessment and marking provide regular and detailed guidance on what level students are at and what they need to do to improve. Lessons are consistently good and there are outstanding features of planning and classroom practice. Students have excellent opportunities to think and express their views. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for students to follow courses that meet their needs and to gain additional qualifications, especially in basic skills. Many students receive effectively targeted support to improve their literacy and numeracy which has resulted in improved confidence and well-developed basic skills. Groups of underachieving students have been targeted for particular programmes of support which has accelerated their progress.

Students are mature, sensible and responsible in their behaviour both in and beyond school. Their social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development is excellent. They are thoughtful and reflective, skilled in working with others and open to understanding other cultures and views. Students are fully involved in their own learning and their curriculum choices. As a result, they are very well focused and have high aspirations for their future. The high levels of motivation in the classroom are reflected in the increased and above average level of attendance and the low levels of persistent absence.

The headteacher's vision that all students can achieve their potential is clearly shared by all staff. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership and they are very well supported by a strong and unified team of senior managers. Leaders

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at all levels are effective in bringing about rapid and significant improvements in provision and student outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation by senior and middle leaders are clear and incisive. Teaching and support staff have an accurate and detailed understanding of student needs. Morale in school is exceptionally high. The school has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment by ensuring that:
  - an increasing proportion gain A and A\* grades at GCSE in English and mathematics
  - all subjects achieve GCSE standards at the national average or higher.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Standards in English and science have risen significantly since the last inspection. In 2009, the school exceeded its targets in the specialist performing arts subjects. Students gain a large number of qualifications in basic skills including information and communication technology. Students make excellent progress at Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science and achieve higher standards than predicted by their Key Stage 2 results. At the end of Key Stage 4, students of all abilities make significantly better than expected progress in gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics. Over the last three years lower ability students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have made year-on-year improvements in their rates of progress and the gap between boys and girls has narrowed. Students' positive attitudes and genuine desire to improve make a strong contribution to learning and progress in lessons. Students' speaking and listening skills are well developed and students of all abilities engage in purposeful classroom dialogue and activity.

Students, parents and carers all agree that school provides a very safe and secure environment. Students are very confident of the support from adults and peer mentors. High numbers of students stay for school lunch and students are justifiably proud of their healthy eating regimes. Almost all students have a good commitment to their own physical, emotional and mental well-being. This is reflected in the very high take-up of sport, drama, dance and music. Students speak enthusiastically about their many projects in the community. They are especially proud of their input into the design for the new school, their involvement in cultural heritage week and the numerous drama productions. They are very keen to take up responsibilities as prefects, student councillors and mentors, and many students from a wide range of groups have a strong voice in decisions relating to their well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

High quality and consistent lesson planning enables students to develop good skills at interpreting information, making choices and working in teams. The school's work on improving speaking and listening has been highly successful and the quality of dialogue in lessons is outstanding. Some teaching is outstanding because teachers capture students' interest through the imaginative use of high quality visual resources; they harness students' enthusiasm with practical challenges; and they develop students' thinking skills through problem-solving activities and open-ended questioning.

Well-trained teaching assistants are highly effective in teaching literacy and numeracy, which benefits many students.

Students know their learning targets and are challenged to produce their best work. The consistent use of praise contributes to the rapid progress they make in lessons. The introduction of a new marking scheme, 'Even Better If', is popular with students and, in most lessons, is very effective in giving specific advice on what they need to do to improve. The exceptionally thorough tracking system provides weekly monitoring and feedback on students' academic and pastoral progress.

The curriculum is outstanding in the way vocational and academic courses are tailored flexibly to meet students' diverse and changing needs. For example, short intensive courses in key skills, health and social care, music technology and physical education enable students to broaden their skills and gain extra accreditation. Excellent links with the business and industrial communities and with other schools in the locality strengthen the curriculum and extend the opportunities available to students. Students have many opportunities to develop enterprise skills by taking part, for example, in business

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simulations on 'duck day' and organising their own fund-raising ventures to support good causes. The performing arts specialism makes an outstanding contribution to the learning culture of the school through the development of students' creativity, and their speaking and listening skills. Innovative community arts events such as the annual 'Cultural Heritage Week, inspires students and leads to high levels of motivation and pride. There are excellent opportunities to work with national companies such as English National Opera, the Sage Gateshead, and the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Most recently, students have been commissioned by the National Health Service to produce a play for the community about healthy lifestyles.

Early and thorough identification of individual students' needs results in specially tailored curriculum opportunities and rapid pastoral support. Strategies to promote attendance are excellent. The school works highly effectively with other agencies and with 'hard to reach' families which has resulted in a significant decrease in the numbers who are persistently absent. Excellent support for students with emotional, social and behavioural problems has reduced the use of the behaviour support unit and has maintained exceptionally low levels of exclusion. The Connexions service and the school's advice centre are very well used and provide highly valued guidance on personal, health and careers matters. The outstanding reward system motivates all students and, in particular, has helped disaffected students to become motivated learners. Performing arts provision in primary schools makes an excellent contribution to the transition to secondary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have shown very strong determination and skill in bringing about changes in staffing and in establishing the excellent culture for learning in the school. The extremely rigorous systems of target-setting and assessment have played a major role in improving achievement and promoting personal development. Effective actions have been taken to promote equality and maximise the potential of any underperforming group. Improvements in teaching and assessment have been driven by an outstanding professional development programme. Systematic scrutiny of the school's work is followed by rapid and highly effective action focused on meeting the needs of students, often in innovative and creative ways. Performance management is very effective and staff account for the success of the students in their

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care. Governors act with determination, provide support and push the school forward. They have professional expertise which has been utilised well. The school is exemplary in its safeguarding practice. For example, the school ensured child protection checks were carried out and provided free child protection training for key construction personnel working on the new school building.

The school is highly successful in establishing a very wide range of partnerships, locally, nationally and internationally. This significantly enhances all aspects of the school's work. The school has a long track record of innovative work in the community and the arts provision is exceptional in contributing to community cohesion. Students have opportunities to meet with and work alongside others from minority ethnic and faith groups in the region.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Parents hold the school in extremely high regard. The high returns from parents during the inspection showed overwhelming support for the school. Almost all said they were happy with their child's experience at the school. The school keeps parents involved very quickly by text if students are late for examinations and a recent example is that the school sent texts to parents at 5am in the morning to let parents know whether the school was to be open in wintry conditions. Parents feel they are able to communicate with the school and the school's use of email and the website are very much appreciated.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shotton Hall 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 551 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1149 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	142	26	336	61	50	9	12	2
The school keeps my child safe	192	35	331	60	21	4	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	189	34	319	58	35	6	5	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	169	31	334	61	30	5	5	1
The teaching is good at this school	168	30	342	62	22	4	6	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	128	23	331	60	58	11	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	115	21	358	65	60	11	6	1
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)	151	27	337	61	26	5	6	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	141	26	343	62	37	7	6	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	174	32	293	53	52	9	13	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	117	21	331	60	37	7	11	2
The school is led and managed effectively	179	32	307	56	18	3	6	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	207	38	311	56	23	4	8	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



Dear Students

Inspection of Shotton Hall School, Peterlee, SR8 1NX

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. We judged that yours is an outstanding school. These were the things we liked most about your school.

- Attainment has improved significantly over the last three years.
- You make excellent progress in gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics.
- You have outstanding opportunities to take courses and gain qualifications in things that interest you.
- Many of you improve your literacy and numeracy skills because of the excellent support you receive.
- Assessment and marking give you very good guidance on what level you are at and what you need to do to improve.
- You get excellent support from teachers and other adults.
- You have exceptionally good opportunities to develop your skills in working together, solving problems, thinking and discussing.
- You really enjoy the freedom and creativity of the performing arts in school and the community.
- Your positive attitudes and genuine desire to improve make an excellent contribution to the learning in lessons and the life of the school.
- The leadership of the school is outstanding.

To help the school to improve further, we have said that the headteacher and senior leaders should:

- raise attainment by ensuring that:
- an increasing proportion of you gain A and A\* grades at GCSE in English and mathematics
- all subjects achieve GCSE standards at the national average or higher.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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