

Shipston High School a technology college

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125737
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	340831
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Moss HMI

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

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Trevor Russel
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Baker
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2006
School address	Darlingscote Road Shipston-on-Stour Warwickshire
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, representatives of agencies with which the school works and from the local community, including parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at school plans and policies, school records relating to pupils' progress, achievements, attendance and behaviour, pupils' work, records of the support provided to individual pupils, 104 parental questionnaires, 100 pupil questionnaires, and 31 staff questionnaires.

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

- the use of assessment by teachers to ensure suitable levels of challenge in pupils' work and to provide clear guidance to them on how to improve
- the identification of and effectiveness of support for pupils at risk of underachieving
- the effectiveness of self-evaluation throughout the school, including the use of systems and data to track pupils' progress
- the effectiveness of action taken to tackle persistent absence.

Information about the school

Shipston High School is much smaller than the average secondary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and the proportion of these pupils who have statements of special educational need is also above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English. An above average proportion of pupils enters and leaves the school at times other than the usual. The school serves a relatively advantaged population, but pupils are drawn from a wide, rural area, which includes pupils from much less-advantaged backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, but well above the local average. The school is a specialist technology college and has received several awards for the quality of its provision, including the national Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark, Dyslexia Friendly status, and was informed during the course of the inspection that it had been awarded Green Flag status for the quality of its environmental work.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Shipston High School provides a good education for its pupils. It has some particularly good features, notably the very wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities it provides for pupils and the quality of its work with the local community and outside agencies. The pupils make good progress and reach average standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 4. They enjoy their learning. This is shown in the comments they made to inspectors and in surveys carried out by the school and for the inspection. It is also evident in pupils' response and behaviour in lessons and around the school. Attendance is average. It has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly the reduction in the level of persistent absence, as a result of concerted action by the school in partnership with outside agencies. A very large majority of parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at the school.

The quality of teaching is good. Pupils say that lessons are mostly enjoyable. The best practice in teachers' use of assessment to plan lessons and improve pupils learning, evident during the inspection, is not used consistently in all lessons. As a result, the work set is not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able pupils, and less able pupils are not always entirely clear about what specifically they need to do to succeed. The curriculum provided by the school is effective in capturing the interest of pupils and the school makes good use of neighbouring colleges to extend the range of courses available, in order to meet the full range of pupils' needs. The curriculum is augmented by a remarkably rich variety of very popular extra-curricular and enrichment activities, particularly in the creative arts, sport and through links with local community organisations. The school has used its specialist status well to develop many of these links.

Relationships between pupils and with the staff are mutually respectful and contribute significantly to a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well. Pupils who need additional support, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive carefully coordinated programmes of learning and assistance, including from a range of relevant external agencies. Pupils know how to get help, if they need it, and are confident that their needs and concerns will be responded to. As a result, they feel safe and happy at the school. Their behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and welcoming, and respond well to their teachers in lessons. There has been a significant reduction in the number of exclusions since the last inspection and these are now well below average.

The headteacher and senior leaders have sustained a clear focus on improving both the ethos for learning at the school and the quality of teaching. They enjoy the support of a committed governing body and enthusiastic staff. There have been concerted efforts to

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raise pupils' attainment in key subjects that were underperforming. As a result, there have been good improvements in key examinations results since the last inspection. The school has good capacity to improve further. Leaders and managers evaluate the quality of teaching and learning accurately, but do not make full use of information about the quality of pupils' learning provided by the pupils themselves, and their parents and carers, to make further improvements to teaching. Aspects of the school's duties to promote equal opportunities and community cohesion have not been completed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Complete the requirements for
 - promoting equalities, by revising the school's policy with regard to gender and disability
 - promoting community cohesion, by completing a more rigorous analysis of the school's context in terms of religion, ethnicity, and the socio-economic dimension, at the local, national and global levels and drawing up action plans to support the school's work in these areas, within the next six months.
- Improve the quality of teaching by
 - ensuring consistent use of the best practice seen at the school in assessing pupils' needs to plan lessons better and develop activities that provide more focused and targeted approaches for pupils, with appropriately challenging work, particularly for the more able pupils
 - provide pupils with clearer information about what they need to do to improve their work
 - using information gathered through the school's surveys of pupils and parents to inform the planning of teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average, but rising. In this small school, results have been affected markedly by previously high levels of persistent absence. Examination results by the end of Key Stage 4 are average. Pupils are well-motivated towards learning and they make good progress in their lessons. There are no significant differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils at the school, regardless of background and including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Most pupils value their school and speak well of it. They say they feel safe and a very large majority of parents and carers say the school keeps their children safe. Pupils say that instances of bullying and of racism are rare, and are confident that those that do occur are dealt with effectively. Many pupils take part in the very wide range of cultural, sporting, physical and outdoor activities offered by the school. Pupils demonstrate a reasonable understanding of healthy eating and most pupils think that the school helps them to be healthy, and their parents and carers agree.

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Pupils develop good personal skills and attitudes. These, along with increasingly high attainment, a range of work-related skills such as problem-solving and teamwork, and the good advice and guidance they receive, mean that pupils are well prepared for their futures. Pupils' moral and social development is evident in the consideration they show to other people in and out of school. They are eager to accept responsibility and exercise it sensibly and maturely. They show good ability to reflect on spiritual matters, as for example, in their response at the school's Remembrance Friday, organised with the support of the Royal British Legion. Pupils demonstrate a very strong commitment to their school and local community. They take part willingly in a wide range of opportunities to contribute to the life and work of the school and the local community, including supporting environmental projects, and volunteer for activities in large numbers. As a result, the local Shipston in Bloom organisation had no hesitation in approaching the school for its help in the national competition. Pupils' understanding of communities more diverse than their own is less secure.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

¹ 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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Teachers plan well to ensure that lessons help pupils to build on what they have learned before. Pupils are generally well informed about the levels they have achieved in their subjects and they know their targets. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils showed a desire to learn and their excellent behaviour made a significant contribution to their good progress. When given the opportunity, they responded enthusiastically to the work set. In those lessons where teachers made good use of assessment, all pupils were provided with appropriately challenging and stimulating work. In other lessons, less effective use of assessment resulted in planning that lacked sufficient detail about the learning needs of different pupils. As a result, for example, teachers did not always make the most effective use of teaching assistants or stretch the most able pupils sufficiently. The quality of teachers' marking is varied and does not always provide pupils with clear advice on how to improve.

The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities to meet the needs of the pupils. It includes innovative elements. For example, Year 7 pupils are taught the skills to be competent learners, whilst Key Stage 4 pupils who need additional help to learn independently receive discrete support from staff. The school offers a good range of courses linked to its area of specialism. It uses partnerships with other establishments well to overcome restrictions imposed by its relatively small size, for example, to provide a good range of vocational and work-related learning opportunities. A recently introduced GCSE in enterprise has also been very successful. There are opportunities for pupils to undertake qualifications at an earlier stage, for example in information technology in Year 9 and statistics in Year 10. The exceptional range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities extend the pupils' learning very well.

The school provides a welcoming learning environment for its pupils. Excellent, well maintained displays throughout provide numerous examples of good quality work produced by pupils and celebrate their many and varied achievements. The student support centre has been very effective in helping pupils at risk of exclusion to remain in education, for example, with very significantly improved rates of attendance. The arrangements for the transition of pupils into, through and beyond the school work well. Pupils, parents and carers think that the information, advice and guidance provided to pupils enable them to make effective choices about courses and future education and training.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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?

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The actions of senior leaders have brought about good improvements in the areas for development at the last inspection. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and areas that need improvement. They have been appropriately challenging of the school's senior leaders to bring about improvements in underperforming areas and keep themselves informed through a programme of visits to observe practice at the school. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more higher grade GCSEs including English and mathematics in each year since the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has also improved as a result of well focused monitoring, support and professional development for staff. The school has used its specialist subjects well to develop improved practice that has been extended across the school. For example, a thorough system for tracking and evaluating pupils' progress developed by a specialist subject has been taken up across the school, but the level of use by other subjects varies.

There is an exceptionally wide range of external agencies and community bodies with which the school works very effectively. These partnerships make a highly significant contribution to the quality of care, guidance and support that pupils receive, and also to the outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. The school obtains the views of parents and carers and pupils systematically and regularly, and uses these to inform its self-evaluation. It does not use them sufficiently to plan improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, for example, by linking the views to methods and approaches that promote learning best.

The school has ensured there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils or their engagement in all the school offers. Governors have agreed a well conceived policy for promoting race equality, but the policy for promoting other equalities such as gender and disability is very basic. Many aspects of the school's curriculum contribute towards community cohesion, but the school does not have a fully coherent approach to this. For example, there has been no analysis of the school's context in terms of religion, ethnicity, and the socio-economic dimension, at the local, national and global levels. All regulations for safeguarding pupils are met and the school ensures that the arrangements for doing so are reviewed thoroughly.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are supportive of the school and most are happy with their children's experience. Almost all the parents and carers who responded to the inspection survey say that their children enjoy their education and are kept safe, and all say that the teaching at the school is good. A very small minority of parents say that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour, but inspectors found behaviour to be exemplary during the inspection and pupils said that the school deals well with any disciplinary issues that arise.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shipston High School - a technology college 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 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 355 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	45	62	54	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	49	54	47	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	44	60	52	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	34	71	62	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	39	67	58	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	33	63	55	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	38	65	57	3	3	0	0
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)	51	44	56	49	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	43	58	50	4	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	38	55	48	12	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	33	64	56	4	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	61	53	49	43	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	59	42	37	4	3	0	0

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.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shipston High School - a technology college, Shipston-on-Stour, CV36 4DY

Thank you for talking to my colleagues and me and making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We spoke with you in lessons, around the school and in groups, looked at your work, read the results of questionnaires filled in by you and your parents or carers, and spoke with some of your teachers. Here is a summary of our main findings, which I hope will be of interest to you.

Shipston High School provides you with a good education. It does some things very well, such as providing you with a very wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities, and its work with other agencies and organisations in the local community.

You make good progress from your starting points when you join the school and the standards you reach by the end of Key Stage 4 are average.

Your attendance is much improved and is now satisfactory.

Your behaviour is exemplary. You told us that there is little bullying or racism at the school.

Most of your parents support the school and think it is doing a good job.

The headteacher and the staff at the school have a good understanding of what needs to be done to make things even better.

I have asked the headteacher and the staff to make sure all lessons provide you all with a good level of challenge, and that teachers make sure you have a clear understanding of how well you are doing and what is needed to make your work better, so that you can make as much progress as possible. I have asked them also to complete some particular pieces of work that it has to do to make sure that all of the different groups at the school continue to do equally well, and that you get good opportunities to gain experience and understanding of communities more diverse than your own. Many of you, I know, already make a very important contribution to the school and I am sure all of you will want to do everything you can to support the staff in making Shipston High better still.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

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