

Shaftesbury School

Salisbury Road, Shaftesbury, SP7 8ER

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The relatively new headteacher has provided very strong leadership for the school. All leaders and teachers have the highest expectations of students, so that achievement will be raised still further.
- The governing body provides high-quality support for the school's leadership team and sets appropriate challenges for the school
- Current students are making good progress from their starting points. There is rapid improvement evident in many subject areas.
- The curriculum is broad and varied. The wide range of courses provides all students with opportunities to gain appropriate qualifications.
- The school is working hard to improve every student's attitude to learning, closely linking this to raising attainment.
- There has been a relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching and now almost all teaching is good or better. As a result, current students are making rapid progress.
- Relationships throughout the school are good. Students behave well and feel very safe in a secure environment. The school ensures that all forms of discrimination are tackled effectively.
- The sixth form is good and a particular strength of the school. Provision and examination results are good and improving so that students gain the qualifications they need to progress to their chosen next stage, which is university for many.
- The school's specialism in sport ensures that the facilities on site are extensive, and good use is made of them by the wider community out-of-school hours.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils are making more than expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Attendance still remains below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 teachers in 32 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made several short visits to lessons and to the school's special educational needs provision.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body and the Diocese of Salisbury, the school's chaplaincy team, staff, and groups of students. An inspector also had a conversation with the school's independent advisor
- Inspectors observed the school's work, visited several tutor groups, and looked at samples of students' work. They also looked at progress data, documents about school development and evaluation, safeguarding information and records about attendance and behaviour. The records showing the impact of professional development for staff were also examined.
- The views of parents as expressed in 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, and a small number of parents also communicated directly to the inspection team. The responses made by staff in questionnaires completed at the beginning of the inspection were analysed.
- At the time of the inspection, students in Years 11 and 12 were on study leave. Some of these students attended during the inspection period for revision classes, or to take public examinations.

Inspection team

Ann Cox, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Malcolm Davison	Additional Inspector
Faysal Mikdadi	Additional Inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Shaftesbury School is a slightly larger than an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form and serves the town of Shaftesbury in Dorset, and the surrounding area.
- The school works collaboratively with nearby Sturminster Newton School to provide a wider range of qualifications at post-16. Students from Sturminster Newton transfer to Shaftesbury School's roll in the sixth form.
- The school has boarding provision for about 100 students who come from many parts of the world. The boarding provision was not inspected on this occasion.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 attend work-related courses at local schools and colleges which form the North Dorset Partnership, and with Future Roots and Gillingham Youth Centre.
- The school specialises in sports; it has a wide range of facilities which are also available for the use of the community in out-of-school hours.
- Most students are White British and a small number speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also very close to national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of students making more than expected progress in English and mathematics compared to national averages, by:
 - bringing the quality of all teaching up to the standard of the best lessons
 - giving more emphasis to the planning of lessons so that all students are given tasks which are appropriate to their needs and work is not too easy or too hard
 - getting students more actively engaged in learning, working at a rapid pace without direct input from the teacher and taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Improve attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average by:
 - targeting interventions with low attending students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with standards in English and mathematics which are usually close to the national average for Key Stage 2. The cohort who took GCSE in 2012 was significantly below national average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school now has highly developed ways to track the progress of students, and detailed analyses of the data enables the school to put in place targeted interventions to address any issues or specific needs.
- Students in the current Year 11 are on track to gain examination results which will demonstrate good progress from their starting points. These expectations are based on the monitoring by teachers, which has been shown to be accurate in the past, and on the results of component parts of the qualifications which have been finalised at this point. Current students are making better than national average progress in many subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Outcomes for students in the sixth form are improving over time. The most recent results show that the A level and AS level results are above national average, even though the starting points of many students was below national average. The sixth form offers a wide range of courses to suit the needs of all students, with some completing work-related courses in one year and others taking academic courses over two years. Success rates are high.
- The provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. In-class support and careful management ensure that most students are making good progress, especially those with statements of special educational needs, who make better than average progress.
- The school takes active steps to ensure promotion of equality of opportunity, tackles potential discrimination and fosters good relationships throughout the school.
- The school has used the pupil premium funding in a variety of ways, such as providing mentoring, educational visits and curriculum innovation. 2012 examination results show that this group of students did not perform as well as other students, mirroring the position for this group seen nationally. In 2012, the gap between the students entitled to pupil premium support and the others was equivalent to nearly one GCSE grade lower in English and closer to a two grade difference in mathematics.
- For current students in English, the progress of both groups is improving at the same rate and so it means that the gap between them is not yet closing even though standards are rising. In mathematics, the gap is closing rapidly.
- Students who are given additional help through the Year 7 catch-up premium are making good progress and the gap with their peers is closing. Most of the students who speak English as an additional language are boarders, and they stay at the school for varying periods of time. They make very good progress across a wide range of subjects. A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 benefit from work-related courses to study for a qualification in areas such as hair and beauty, engineering, motor vehicle maintenance and animal care. These courses keep the students engaged in education and allow them to leave school with appropriate qualifications and progress into further training, apprenticeships or employment.
- Under its new leadership, the school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations. The policy is to allow students to mature as much as possible before they are entered for public examinations.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is a very strong school ethos of developing the quality of teaching and learning. There has been a strong focus on improving teaching and a comprehensive schedule of lesson observations, performance management and professional development programmes have

resulted in teaching which is good or better in almost every lesson. Inspectors noted that teachers positively welcomed feedback and engaged wholeheartedly in discussions about improvement.

- Inspectors saw examples of outstanding teaching, and the vast majority of teaching was good or better.
- In the best lessons, tasks were personalised for students so that there was a match of the challenge of the task to students' needs. At times, more able students are not challenged enough and this prevents them from making better than expected progress.
- Where teaching was most effective, there was independent learning and teachers used effective questioning to check the students' understanding and promote deeper thinking. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own and their peers' work and recognise what more can be done to improve further.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subjects they teach and they are able to use this expertise to make the lessons interesting.
- The relationships between teachers and their students are good so that students feel very secure in lessons and are not reluctant to try out ideas.
- The Chaplaincy team consists of eleven representatives from every Christian denomination church in Shaftesbury. Members of the team are actively involved in religious education lessons, and regularly give assemblies to the school. In addition, the members of the team offer pastoral care and support to all members of the school community.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The attitude of students to learning is good. The school is already working to develop this through tutorial times, as witnessed by inspectors when they saw activities relating to the Attitude to Learning programme. Students are being encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning, and to be more active in making the best use of their time and facilities.
- Students are extremely polite and courteous towards each other, to staff and to visitors. Behaviour in lessons is good. Students work well together and are considerate to others. A very large majority of parents are happy with the good behaviour of students. Inspectors did not witness any poor behaviour, and any loss of focus only occurred if the pace of teaching was not appropriate for the class. This can happen if students do not have enough opportunities to work by themselves.
- The organisation of the school into mixed age tutor groups helps to encourage collaborative working and good relationships amongst students.
- The use of better behaviour management strategies has led to big improvements in behaviour, as shown by the halving of reported incidents. There has been a decline in formal punishments and exclusions are now rare, being used only as a last resort.
- Students and their parents report that they feel very safe in school. Bullying incidents are rare, and the students are absolutely confident that any matters reported to the school are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Parents also have a high level of confidence in the school, as indicated in Parent View.
- Students are well informed about different forms of bullying and the school takes steps to ensure that antisocial behaviour and unnecessary risks are minimised. Anti-bullying events and updates to students and their families about minimising cyber-safety risks are a regular feature. Students are sensitive about issues such as racism and homophobic bullying and they have a good understanding of potential hazards, including alcohol or substance abuse. Discriminatory language and behaviour are almost unknown; incidents of extremism are unknown in the school.
- Attendance has improved in the last two years, but is still slightly below the national average. The school monitors attendance carefully and is working on strategies to bring about further

improvements. Students are punctual to lessons.

- When older students attend courses at other centres, their attendance is carefully checked, as are all aspects of ensuring their safety and well-being.

The leadership and management are good

- The relatively new headteacher has been unrelenting in pursuing his high ambition for the school, supported by very able senior leaders and the dedicated governing body. As a result, there has been a significant improvement in the progress being made by current students. Much has been achieved already but there is no complacency in seeking the highest levels of achievement and personal development of students.
- Very strong leadership of the sixth form has secured steady improvements in all aspects.
- Secondment of some middle leaders to the senior leadership team for fixed terms has facilitated professional development and significantly enhanced the whole management team's capacity for further improvements. Managers are given responsibility to develop specific areas and, together, these have strengthened the leadership of the school.
- The school has a robust system for self-evaluation, and has drawn up action plans to address identified shortcomings. There is a clear system for line management and accountability to ensure that improvements are put into action.
- Progress in literacy is good. The measures in place are having a positive impact on speaking, listening and reading. The launch of "POW" to Key Stage 3 students promotes punctuation, organisation and words and has been successfully taken on board. Good use is being made of the school's lending library. The school needs to develop the work further now by focusing on extended writing.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, providing an appropriate range of opportunities to students so that they gain qualifications and are well equipped to move on to the next stage of their development. The curriculum meets the needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Alternative pathways are available to students in Key Stage 4 so that they remain engaged in education, and leave school with recognised qualifications in areas such as hairdressing, engineering and animal care. Only a very small proportion of students do not progress to further education, training or employment.
- The school seeks to work closely with all parents and carers. Parents and carers are kept well informed through comprehensive monthly newsletters which are produced on paper and available online. The school's website includes a vast amount of information. The school strives to involve parents and carers in a Parents' Forum group, especially those who have made suggestions about making improvements.
- The school works hard to ensure the smooth transition of new students from primary schools. All new students have opportunities to visit the school and become familiar with it prior to their transfer in year 7.
- Students are given a wide range of experiences to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Sixth form students have opportunities to visit Rwanda to carry out project work. Nearly all students who are boarders at the school come from overseas and this adds a welcomed dimension to the school, allowing students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to work together and learn about each other.
- The "Drop Days", when the normal timetable is suspended, provide students with a wide range of opportunities to learn about matters such as cyber safety, and global citizenship.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements and record keeping is exemplary.
- Local authority representatives regularly visit the school and offer appropriate support to ensure that it can continue to improve.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are extremely well informed about the work of the school and are well aware of its relative strengths and weaknesses. Regular meetings between the school's senior leaders and governors provide opportunities for updates about progress and the quality of teaching. The school's leaders are given appropriate challenge by the governors, who acknowledge the progress made already and also recognise the capacity to make more improvements, especially to raise the achievement of more able students. The knowledge of governors is complemented by advice from an independent consultant, the diocese and the local authority. Governors keenly take advantage of opportunities for training and development. The governors have a good overview of the performance management system and link success to teachers' pay awards insofar as funds will allow. They know how the school tackles any underperformance. Governors make regular visits to the school and take active steps to engage parents and community members. Governors judiciously monitor the management of financial resources, including the use of the pupil premium fund, and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113889
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	405491

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1054
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Brickell
Headteacher	Mark Blackman
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 June 2011
Telephone number	01747 854498
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