

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHAFTESBURY HIGH SCHOOL**

Harrow, Middlesex

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102260

Headteacher: Mr Paul Williams

Lead inspector: Mrs Patricia Potheary

Dates of inspection: 31 January – 3 February 2005

Inspection number: 268631

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 to 17 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	91
School address:	Headstone Lane Harrow Middlesex
Postcode:	HA3 6LE
Telephone number:	0208 428 2482
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pam Tamblyn
Date of previous inspection:	18 January 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Shaftesbury High School is a day community special school for 100 boys and girls aged 11 to 17 years. There are 91 students, 51 boys and 40 girls on roll. Forty-three students have moderate learning difficulties, 20 severe learning difficulties, 11 emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, 9 autistic spectrum disorders, 4 speech and language difficulties, 3 sensory impairment and 1 has dyslexia. Forty-nine students are of White British heritage, 25 mainly Indian/Asian British heritage, and 16 from a variety of other ethnic groups. Twenty students receive help for English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage of English acquisition. Pupil mobility is low and the number of pupils in public care is low. Students' socio-economic backgrounds are below national averages and attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average.

The school is involved in local inclusion initiatives, is a recognised City and Guilds centre for training teaching assistants and works with the Graduate Teachers Programme. It has the Healthy Schools Award 2001, Investors in People 2000- 2004, and the School Achievement Award in 2000 and 2001. The school also provides a breakfast club, youth club, play schemes and parent and carers groups within the community. The school supports five students who are registered at other schools but attend Shaftesbury part time. In addition, 25 students from the school attend two local colleges for at least one full day per week and 15 attend a local high school for various lessons each week. The school has been a high school for students aged 11-17 since September 2000 and in September 2004 received approval to teach students up to the age of 19 years.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21765	Patricia Potheary	Lead inspector	Geography History Modern foreign languages Religious education
9619	Robert Miller	Lay inspector	
23412	Alvin Jeffs	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Music
8056	Howard Probert	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Citizenship Personal, social and health education
22948	Mary Vallis	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Design and technology Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Shaftesbury is a good school** and a welcoming and caring place to be. Students achieve well, despite the very wide range of students' learning needs because the quality of teaching, learning, leadership and management are good. The school provides good value for money.

The schools' main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students make good progress over time because teaching is consistently effective.
- A keen focus on helping students develop their independence, confidence and personal and social skills prepares them very well for learning.
- The measures of how well students are doing do not record small enough steps. This leads to unclear guidance for parents, carers, staff and governors on what has been achieved and what needs to be done to help the school improve further.
- The rich curriculum, particularly in art and the performing arts, offers a wide range of experiences to suit the different learning needs of students.
- Students are very well cared for and the school works effectively with parents and the wider community.
- Good leadership and management provide the systems, motivation and drive for strong and committed teamwork, which leads to the good quality of overall provision.
- The new Post-16 provision is developing rapidly and teaching is strong. The curriculum and accommodation, however, are not yet developed well enough to provide sufficient choice of vocational courses, or an environment fully suited to their age.
- The arrangements for homework are not sufficiently systematic to meet the needs of many pupils and their parents or carers.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now securely good for all age groups, which is a very good improvement. This, in turn, is leading to improved achievement, especially in the core subjects. Behaviour is now well managed, any bullying is dealt with efficiently, the school is calm and lessons run smoothly. Assessment has improved significantly, although it lacks sufficient detail to drive school improvement effectively. Improvements in leadership and management are at the heart of the positive changes being made to the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 11	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 13	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Very good</b>

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

**Achievement is good** for students to age 16 and satisfactory for those Post-16, regardless of ability or significantly different needs. In English, mathematics and ICT students of all ages achieve well because teaching is strong. In science, achievement is good in lessons due to recent improvements, but it is satisfactory, overall. Achievements in art, design and technology and personal, social and health education are particularly good. At Post-16, achievement in the courses offered is generally good, especially in key areas of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and life skills, but it is too limited in vocational courses, and therefore satisfactory, overall. The school meets targets set for each age group, although these do not reflect the good progress being made. There is a year on year increase in the number of qualifications awarded to students, but there remains room for further improvement. **Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Students of all ages have very positive attitudes to work in many different subjects.

Students' behaviour is good, overall, they enjoy coming to school and attendance has improved significantly. Students are helped very well to take responsibility within the school community, growing in confidence and maturity especially towards learning.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is also good.** In all age groups, teaching and learning are at least good and often better. Teaching in English, mathematics, science and ICT is good and in art and design and technology it is very good. Teachers' subject knowledge, high quality relationships and lesson organisation are very good. Lessons usually meet the different learning needs of all students and, with the skilled input of teaching assistants, students work hard and learn well. In a few lessons, limited planning and assessment means that a small minority of students do not learn effectively. Homework is not sufficiently well organised to contribute well to student learning. The good curriculum is broad, but lacks sufficient time for physical education. All students have very good opportunities to take part in the arts and have equal access to a rich range of activities. There is very good personal and social education, but citizenship, vocational courses and opportunities for higher-level qualifications remain more limited. The new Post-16 curriculum and accommodation are rapidly developing, but do not yet provide sufficient choice of courses. The care, guidance and support, to help students make the right choices, are very good. Links with parents, colleges, other schools and organisations are good, enabling students to take part in the wider community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher and senior leadership team successfully inspire a strong and enthusiastic team spirit amongst staff, which helps students to do their best. Very good commitment to include all students meets their diverse needs successfully. Measurements of student progress are not sufficiently detailed to show clearly where school improvement is needed. A strong staff is recruited and managed imaginatively to secure stability and improving standards. Committed and competent governance ensures that the school is well run and held to account. Financial management is very good, ensuring that the school achieves the priorities it identifies within its long-term planning.

## **PARENTS AND PUPILS VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and carers think that Shaftesbury is a good and caring school and that students make good progress and become more confident. A few parents and students are concerned about bullying and behaviour, although this is much improved recently, and several would like more formal homework arrangements. Some parents are concerned that their children show no progress, usually because their good achievement is not evident from national measures. Students enjoy coming to school and think it helps them in many ways.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Adopt systems to measure how well students are doing, which record smaller steps. This is in order to communicate what has been achieved to parents, staff and governors and to drive school improvement more effectively.
- Develop the quality of the curriculum and accommodation for students Post 16, to ensure that they receive more choice of vocational courses and an environment more suited to their age.
- Develop a more systematic structure for giving homework to meet the needs of more students and to enable parents and carers to support their work at home.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Achievement is good for students aged 11 to 16 and satisfactory for those Post 16.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been significant improvement in achievement since the last inspection, especially in English, mathematics and ICT where students now achieve well.
- The school's targets are generally met but do not reflect the good progress being made.
- Achievement in art, design and technology and personal, social and health education is very good for all students.
- Achievement in science is satisfactory rather than good, with insufficient opportunity for higher-attaining students to gain accreditation.
- There is a good increase in the overall number of qualifications gained each year, although there is still room for improvement in the number of higher level qualifications achieved.
- Achievement in the new Post-16 provision is good in lessons and in accredited courses, but is limited by insufficiently broad opportunities.

#### **Commentary**

1. Students up to the age of 16 make good overall progress and achieve well regardless of ethnicity, gender or ability. Students with significant additional special educational needs, such as autistic spectrum disorders or severe learning difficulty, achieve equally well because they have good individual goals in the majority of lessons. Students with English as an additional language show good overall achievement and clear improvement in their reading ability year on year.
2. The school sets annual targets for each key stage, based upon very careful analysis of individual students' work, and these are usually achieved. However, far too many students are predicted to make no measurable progress, which communicates the wrong message to parents and staff. This has led instead, to effective individual objectives for smaller achievements being set by students and staff in each subject. These are achieved at a steady rate and the overall National Curriculum levels achieved and value-added data, by the end of Year 11 are in line with other similar, and similarly good, schools. The year on year increase in the number of qualifications achieved is a significant improvement and, where appropriate, students take a full GCSE in the local mainstream school. However, there is room for improvement in the number of entry level GCSEs that students could attain, for example, in science, ICT and art.
3. Achievement, especially in the core subjects, has shown a significant improvement, which is directly attributable to the improvements in teaching. All the core skills are developed well enough to enable students to use them to make suitable progress in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, students use the Internet to find information in humanities, hold lively debates in Citizenship, and at Post 16 use their numeracy skills very effectively to help them shop and cook. In English, progress is now good but it is very good in speaking and listening with no longer any significant differences in achievement between the different age groups, including those in the sixth form. Written work has improved and is now satisfactory, although there is room for further improvement here.
4. Achievement in mathematics has also improved well and is equally good in all areas and for all age groups. Lively mental exercises, strong development of number work, and a very good use of graphs in several subjects, demonstrate students' growing mathematical skills. In ICT improvement is very good and students now achieve well, using the computers for a wide



range of subjects and producing lively work to display. Science has improved well. Achievement in science lessons is currently good because the teaching now good. However, the subject lacks stable staffing and management, which in turn leads to a limited range of qualifications, weak assessment and satisfactory rather than good achievement, overall.

- Achievement in art, drama and performance, as well as design and technology, is particularly strong and reflects the vibrant nature of the school's curriculum. The progress made by students in their personal, social and health education is also a strength and supports learning in a host of subjects. There was no assessment data to support an overall judgement on achievement in religious education but achievement in the lessons seen was good.

### **Post-16 provision**

- Provision for students at Post-16 is new and assessment of their achievements is too recent to judge. It was not appropriate to set targets for this group this academic year. Students make good progress in core subjects, such as numeracy and literacy, which are well taught. They are also beginning to achieve well in courses to develop their independence and life skills provided by the school and a local college. For example, students show good progress in their ability to travel to and from college independently. They are all in line to gain qualifications through the ASDAN Award Scheme. However, they do not yet have the opportunity to extend these basic skills with sufficient vocational courses to achieve well, overall.

### **Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Students' attitudes are very good. Behaviour and attendance are good and punctuality is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most students have a good understanding of how they are expected to behave and so lessons run smoothly and the school is an orderly community.
- Very good opportunities are provided to help students to build confidence, develop good self-esteem and take responsibility, which leads to some very positive attitudes towards learning.
- Students' very good moral, social and cultural development is evident in the very good relationships they have with one another and with adults.
- The school's very effective action to promote good attendance, and parents and carers efforts to ensure that their children attend school, has resulted in much improved attendance rates over the last four years.

### **Commentary**

- Students, including those Post 16, show very good attitudes to learning in lessons. Students listen attentively and undertake tasks well. This is the result of good teaching where teachers maintain a high level of interest and set appropriately challenging tasks. This ensures that students of all levels of attainment have the opportunity to achieve well. The majority of parents think that their children enjoy coming to school.
- Standards of behaviour are good in the classroom and around the school. The school expects students to behave very well and is largely successful in achieving this, as behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. Students think teachers are fair, listen to their ideas and are very approachable. Some parents and students are concerned about behaviour and bullying. Through observations and discussions with students and staff, it is clear that any incidents of bullying or difficult behaviour are managed properly and swiftly and resolved effectively by staff. Students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties show good improvement over time in their behaviour and learning. This is because the school

provides high levels of care, very good counselling and individual behaviour support plans that are followed well by all staff.

9. Good relationships exist between students and their peers and between students and staff, which contribute in a significant way to the caring ethos of the school. The school council and citizenship lessons, offer opportunities for students to show enterprise and responsibility. School questionnaires influence school practice and routines. Students are encouraged to share feelings with staff and their peers and many are developing higher levels of self-esteem. Staff give a very positive lead in engendering these good relationships; for example, by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity as well as acting as good role models.
10. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, overall, particularly in the social, moral and cultural aspects. The very good ethos of the school helps to promote spiritual development and subjects such as personal, social and health education, school assemblies, religious education and art and design make a good contribution. The school ensures that students experience the traditions of a wide range of cultures as well as their own during the school year; for example, Diwali in November and Hanukkah in December. Lessons in a number of subjects and other activities, help to create a fuller understanding of the multicultural society in which we live and an ability to live successfully in a diverse community.
11. The moral and social development of the students is very good, with many opportunities provided for students to reflect upon, and think about, the impact of their actions on others. For example, in one assembly, four students were describing their different origins and their feelings and experiences of school. Good links were made between feelings and the importance of saying 'thank you' and 'sorry'. Students know right from wrong and collaborate well with one another in lessons and a wide range of activities. Students are very willing to take responsibility, taking part in the school council, offering help to others, working on joint projects and even holding doors open politely.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.6	School data	4.6
National data	8.7	National data	1.9

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

12. The rate of attendance for the last academic year was below that of similar schools nationally. This was due, in the main, to the continuous unauthorised absence of one student. However, there has been a significant increase in attendance in this current year and, at 91.8 per cent so far, it is above the national average. This is a continuous improvement since the previous inspection. The school works very hard in co-operation with parents and the educational welfare service, to ensure that students arrive safely and punctually at school. Staff are very quick to establish the reason for unexplained absences.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	48	30	1
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	12	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	0	0
Any other ethnic group	18	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

13. There have been 30 fixed-period exclusions involving 12 students. One student was permanently excluded. The inspection team found that the exclusion process has been used effectively for the sake of the whole community and has resulted in improved behaviour.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good, overall. The quality of teaching, learning, curriculum and links with parents, other schools, colleges and the community is good. The care, welfare, health and safety provided for students are very good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and students' learning is good. Assessment of students' work is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very high proportion of teaching for all age groups is at least good or better, representing considerable improvement since the last inspection.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge, making lessons meaningful and interesting to students who are keen to learn.
- Lessons are well planned and organised, beginning and ending on time, so that students have clear structures to support their learning.
- Teaching assistants make a substantial contribution to the good quality of learning.
- Very good attention is paid to the different learning needs of students so that every one is included in ways in which they learn best. This is not true of a few lessons.
- Insufficient use is made of homework to extend or consolidate students' learning and enable parent and carers to help their children at home.
- Assessment to develop individual learning in lessons is usually good, but this is not always consistent.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	15 (32%)	27 (57%)	4 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

14. As more than 90 per cent of lessons for students age 12 to 18 were at least good, with over a third being very good or excellent, teaching is a clear strength of the school. This is also the view of parents. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents good improvement since the last inspection and, for students aged 12 to 14 years, very good improvement. In English, teaching is good, overall, including the Post-16 group. It is very good for students aged 15 and 16 and in all groups for speaking and listening. The teaching of writing is satisfactory. Teaching is also good in mathematics, science and ICT for all age groups. Teaching is very good in art and design and technology.
15. In the majority of lessons, including those for students Post 16, teachers clearly understand their subject and enjoy teaching it. In one religious education lesson, for example, the details of Jewish religious rites of passage were brought alive through clear explanation, supported by well-organised resources such as different examples of the 'Torah' and Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. The students in most lessons become very interested because of teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject. This very good subject knowledge extends to cross-curricular links in most lessons, where opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are numerous and elements of citizenship and multicultural aspects are frequently built in to the planning.
16. Lessons begin sharply and are very well planned to use all the time available. This gives a good business-like sense of purpose to the majority of lessons. The good management of behaviour and strong relationships means that students try to do their best. In lessons where students are difficult, teachers and teaching assistants are effective in calming them and keeping the lesson on track. Senior management provides good support.
17. Teaching assistants are highly skilled in supporting students; they know them very well, providing good continuity from lesson to lesson. Teaching assistants' work is clearly defined, making a major contribution to the quality of learning taking place. Good-humoured, regular contact with TAs in one Year 8 mathematics lesson meant that easily distracted students were kept on task and could eventually sequence their numbers.
18. Students, including those with English as an additional language, are included very well in the majority of lessons regardless of their different abilities or particular special educational need. The use of symbols, signing, large print and different tasks are just a few of the specialist approaches being used to help all students join in and learn from the lesson. In a small minority of lessons, not all the work is planned in this way. Sometimes the highest-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently or those with the greatest difficulties do not fully understand what is happening.
19. Teachers do not give homework regularly, only on request from students or parents. This means that homework tasks are not planned into the lesson and students miss opportunities to learn more or practice further at home. Several parents feel that this disadvantages their child and prevents them being more involved with their child's learning.
20. Formal assessment of what students have learned, so that the next lesson is planned to take the different learning of each individual student forward, is often good. This is true of English, mathematics and ICT, but it is not consistent and assessment is weak in several subjects, particularly in science, physical education and religious education. The use of an assessment

system in the sixth form is only just being developed. The very good knowledge of students' achievements by teachers and teaching assistants partly overcomes the detrimental effects of this.

## The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. Opportunities for enrichment are very good and accommodation and resources are good. The new sixth form curriculum, accommodation and resources are not yet satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- All students, including those with significantly different needs are included very well in the school's provision.
- Students have very good opportunities to participate in art and the performing arts.
- The school provides a very wide range of visits and other enrichments activities, including residential experiences, which enhance many areas of the curriculum.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good, supporting many areas of students learning. Citizenship is not sufficiently well developed.
- Provision for physical education is unsatisfactory because too little time is given to the subject.
- The school has a very good programme of careers education and advice, but students have too few opportunities to undertake vocational courses which support work-related learning.
- For a few pupils there is insufficient accreditation at a level to suit their abilities.
- Very able, well-qualified teaching assistants support the good quality of the curriculum.
- The curriculum and accommodation for the sixth form is strong in parts and rapidly developing. However, it is not currently sufficiently well developed to meet different students' aptitudes or to provide them with a sufficiently mature environment.

## Commentary

21. The curriculum is broad and generally well-balanced, providing good learning opportunities for students aged 12 to 16. This shows good improvement since the previous inspection, especially in equality of access to the curriculum, which is now very good. Students are no longer withdrawn from lessons for misbehaviour for large amounts of time. Students who occasionally need to work away from their peers are well supervised to complete their work and return to the classroom as soon as possible. Individual learning plans ensure that all students, including those with additional special educational needs or English as an additional language, receive a curriculum which meets their needs. For example, the advice of the sensory support service and the input of the speech and language therapist help ensure that students have good access to the curriculum or specific teaching to improve communication or aid understanding. Planning within subjects has also improved, so it is easier to see how students build on their previous experience as they progress through the school.
22. Shaftesbury school is justifiably proud of its arts curriculum. This contributes very strongly to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Full advantage is taken of outstanding local amenities; so, for example, students visit The National Portrait Gallery, The Royal Academy of Art, The Natural History Museum and Hampton Court. They see live performances at local theatres and benefit from National Theatre workshops in school. They attend the cinema and watch West End productions such as *Blood Brothers*, then take part in the school's own ambitious productions. These not only include music, dance and drama, but involve students in the technical aspects of live performance.
23. Many areas of the curriculum are considerably enriched by well-planned visits. Students visit the local Hindu temple. They learn about travel and transport as they visit Heathrow Visitors' Centre or study the environment at the Wetlands Centre, Barnes. Students become more independent and resilient when they take part in residential opportunities such as staying in the Brecon Beacons, New Forest or an activity centre in Buckinghamshire. Other good

innovations include a brain gym of quick mental activities to sharpen thinking and prepare pupils for the tasks ahead, and yoga. These well-led sessions of yoga have a noticeable calming effect as stress levels reduce and students relax, focusing their attention inwards, giving them time to reflect. Support for learning outside the school day is good, overall. The Breakfast Club is well attended and appreciated by a regular group of students. All students have opportunities to join in a range of activities, such as arts and crafts, ICT, a homework club or sport at the end of the school day. This new provision is variable in quality and is due for review.

24. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The emphasis is on developing independence skills, remaining safe and healthy and preparing students to be responsible members of the community. Excellent use is made of specialist advice, such as that provided by drugs education support staff, transport police and the school nurse. Parents have been involved in drawing up the drugs and relationship policy and the school website designer has helped educate students about safety on the Internet. The school has recently implemented a new scheme to develop students' citizenship skills. Planning and teaching of these lessons are good or very good. However, the curriculum, resources and assessment necessary for developing students' citizenship skills further are not yet sufficient to build on the good teaching currently being provided. There are several well-planned links to citizenship in subjects such as religious education and geography, which support the subject well.
25. Students have full access to all subjects of the National Curriculum. The timing of the school day has been revised this year and is generally proving a success, especially in promoting good behaviour because of shorter lunch-times. However, practical subjects such as design and technology and art and design have suffered because there is less time to complete activities. Provision for physical education is unsatisfactory because students have too few opportunities to take part in regular physical activities, although younger students have good opportunities to swim.
26. The curriculum to prepare students aged 14 to 17 for the world of work is very good in the way students are supported to make decisions about their future, helped to undertake appropriate work experience and receive regular careers education. Students are guided into the next stage of their education or careers by a full-time 'Connexions' advisor. The element of the 14 to 19 curriculum to help students undertake a wider range of courses more suited to their needs is underdeveloped, with too few vocational courses and enterprise initiatives. The two being offered, including plumbing, are of high quality but are only available to a small number of students. In addition, students do not always have the opportunity to take higher-level qualifications in school, such as the entry level GCSE in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The number of qualifications available is improving well and the school is working hard to develop more courses as they recognise that this is an important tool in the way students can communicate their abilities in the future.
27. The school has a sufficient number of teachers to cover all areas of the curriculum and the approach to staffing has been imaginative to ensure stability. The number and quality of support staff, including teaching assistants, administrative staff and site management staff, is very good. There is a dedicated school counsellor, for example, who contributes substantially towards enabling some students to learn more effectively. The school is particularly effective in recruiting and retaining teaching assistants of high calibre. This is because they have supported them in obtaining a range of qualifications, with some retraining as teachers. Resources and accommodation are good, overall. The school has specialist rooms for many subjects, including science, food technology and performing arts.

### **Post-16 provision**

28. The Post-16 provision was newly formed in September 2004 and is not yet fully developed. There are several strengths but also several weaknesses. The new co-ordinator is

knowledgeable and well qualified to take the sixth form forward appropriately. Current development is rapid. She has begun to map out what is needed and is providing several highly appropriate courses, including strong basic skills teaching, a new qualification scheme, a new assessment system and age-appropriate resources. The students attend a local college one day per week, which is providing some basic skills for independence, life and living. The main weakness is the lack of choice in vocational courses and this is partly due to the limited provision locally. In addition, the room in school used by the sixth form is not of a high enough quality, lacking a distinct identity, good social facilities or room for growth. The school has secured very good, shared provision of a house newly built in the grounds to help develop further life skills, although this is not ready yet.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school provides very good levels of care, welfare, health and safety for the students. The provision of support, advice and guidance for students is good. There is very good involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very effective procedures in place to ensure that students work and play in a safe and healthy environment.
- Students have very good and trusting relationships with one or more adults in the school to whom they can turn.
- Students have access to well-informed support and guidance based upon their personal learning objectives, including further study or career opportunities.
- The school is very active in seeking the views of the students on school improvement.
- Very good induction arrangements are in place for students joining the school.
- Not all students are yet assessing their own work but they are all supported in setting and reviewing personal targets in most subjects.

### **Commentary**

29. This is a very caring school where staff treat students fairly and with dignity. There is a very strong mutual respect between students and adults in the school. A well-coordinated pastoral team, including a school counsellor, ensures that students are comfortable about approaching individual teachers or support staff for help or guidance.
30. Staff know the students and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and are able therefore to provide good support and guidance. The older students, particularly, receive very good individual advice on the choice of colleges, courses and future employment from the Connexions Adviser based at the school. Parents say that the arrangements for their sons and daughters to settle in when they start at the school are very good. There is a gradual process to introduce students and their parents to school routines and this familiarisation period helps most students feel welcomed and comfortable in their learning. Parents also say that the staff successfully encourage their children to become mature and independent.
31. Health and safety arrangements are securely in place and risk assessments are carried out for the premises and school trips. An access audit has been carried out to assess the provision for the admission of pupils with disabilities, particularly those in wheelchairs, and the premises meet the statutory requirements. The quality of care and attention to medical needs during the day is very good. Preventable accidents are rare and accident records are analysed to identify and remedy the cause and frequency. Comprehensive arrangements for child protection are in place and well known to all staff and governors. There are very effective links with outside agencies.

32. The school actively encourages the students' views both in informal and formal ways. There is a school council that considers matters as diverse as changing the name of the school and its uniform and the way bullying is dealt with. This makes a very valuable addition to students' personal development. Students contribute to their annual reviews and are involved in setting personal and learning targets and assessing their own work.
33. The care, guidance and support provided for students have significantly improved since the previous inspection.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has good partnerships with parents and other schools and colleges. It has very good links with the community and provides good extended services and educational support programmes.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are kept well informed about the school and their children's progress.
- There are very good links with the community and this help pupils' personal development and achievement.
- There are very good procedures for dealing with the concerns or complaints of carers or parents.
- The good links with other schools and colleges ensure a smooth transition for pupils to their next stage of education and good opportunities for inclusion.
- The support provided for all parents to enable them to help their child at home is insufficiently developed.
- Provision of training to teaching assistants from all schools in the authority is of a high quality, contributing to improved support for pupils in other schools as well as Shaftesbury.

### **Commentary**

34. Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school and what it provides. The school goes to considerable lengths to meet parents and involve them in its work, and as a result there is very good attendance at meetings with over 70 per cent attending parents meetings, and 100 per cent attending annual reviews. However, some parents consider that the school is not doing enough to explain how they can help their child at home through, for example, providing appropriate homework. Others feel that support to help them understand the curriculum is limited. The school does provide a clear outline of what is to be taught in each subject and parents are given the key words to be taught in each topic, which most find helpful. The recently formed Parent/Carer Group, as well as the school itself, has already identified this as an area for further development in an effort to engage all parents. Procedures formally to consult parents, as part of school self-evaluation for improvement is not formally in place, although parents' views are regularly sought.
35. Parents are kept well informed about the school through the prospectus, newsletters and school notice boards. They appreciate the opportunities to discuss their child's progress at both formal and informal meetings with teachers. A helpful end-of-year academic report accompanies the annual review of individual educational plans and learning objectives. The school uses these frequent opportunities to ensure that parents are satisfied and have no worries or concerns. If they do, the school does its best to resolve them quickly and effectively. The school has engaged a number of parents and other volunteers from the community to come and help in school. Some listen to children read and others help in the library or on school trips, adding considerably to the quality of provision.



36. The school links well with the adjacent secondary school to ensure that effective teaching practice is shared and to take part in joint initiatives. A good number of Shaftesbury students currently attend various lessons there, including mathematics, drama and music, and are well integrated and included in these activities. A small number of older students also attend two colleges in the area for the purposes of study and pre-vocational training.
37. The very good links with the community include a close liaison with the police, church, Rotary and golf clubs. The local area is used very well for frequent high-quality educational visits as are locations further away, such as The National Gallery. Residential visits include trips to the Brecon Beacons and the New Forest for the purposes of adventure training. A number of community groups use the school premises out of school hours. Local employers provide a wide and varied range of work experience opportunities for Year 11 and older students. The school welcomes being an integral part of the local community and all of these established links help to enhance students' progress and development and enrich the curriculum.
38. The school provides professional development opportunities for teaching assistants from Shaftesbury and mainstream schools in and around the Harrow area. This training, which leads to a recognised City and Guilds qualification, enables teaching assistants better to assist pupils with special educational needs at their own schools. This is proving of benefit to the students concerned. The school does not yet provide an outreach service to the wider school community as part of the developing role of special schools, although it does provide some informal advice in addition to specialist training for teachers. Some students attend Shaftesbury from other schools for an induction period before becoming full time.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the headteacher and key staff, and day-to-day management of the school, are good. Governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leaders support, inspire and motivate staff very well to work enthusiastically and to do their very best for the students.
- The school has developed an ethos of very strong teamwork, which contributes significantly to staff motivation and student achievement.
- The school welcomes and includes a wide range of students and is highly committed to involving each and every one appropriately to meet their individual needs.
- The whole-school systems used to measure performance do not record small enough steps to communicate progress for the majority of students or set meaningful targets for school improvement.
- Recruitment and retention of staff is managed very effectively to ensure an improving quality of teaching and learning.
- The school has successfully instigated many changes since the last inspection, although there remains an urgent need to develop key features of the school strategic plan to secure student entitlement.
- The school manages its finances very well to achieve the priorities it identifies within its long-term planning.

### **Commentary**

39. The success of Shaftesbury High School arises largely from the support and motivation provided by the senior staff and governors. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's needs and is willing to challenge and make suggestions where it feels is necessary. Day-to-day management has a consistency and enthusiasm, which derives from the headteacher, who makes all staff feel valued. In addition, senior staff provide good role models for encouraging effective teaching, strong pastoral care and high quality professional

development. These positive attitudes encourage all staff to develop their skills and, in turn, set good role models for the students. Parents also think that the school is well led and managed.

40. Visitors to the school invariably comment on the feeling of the school being a 'team'. This is a very real strength. The headteacher and deputy are very well supported by a management team representing every member of staff. The very good teaching assistants are well coordinated and represented by a higher level teaching assistant. The larger subject departments, such as mathematics and English, work well as the result of good leadership, a willingness to listen and an enthusiasm for new ideas. This is also apparent in the cohesive work by staff with pastoral responsibilities. At a classroom level, there is very good, often excellent, teamwork between teaching staff, teaching assistants and therapists. Students see adults working well together and seek to copy this in their own school lives.
41. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection, especially in subject planning and the quality of teaching. There is an appropriate and detailed strategic plan for the next three years, including developments for students aged 12 to 14, for ICT, citizenship, the post-16 curriculum, work-related learning and college links. All areas identified require urgent attention to ensure that students receive their full entitlement and that positive developments that have already taken place continue.
42. Inclusion is a strength of the school. All students and staff are welcomed. People are judged by who they are and what they contribute rather than by academic achievement alone. Students are involved in decision making and this helps them to develop responsibility and a feeling of belonging. They quickly realise that their school is there to assist and support them. Consequently, they become well motivated and work harder.
43. Considerable work has been undertaken within subjects to ensure that there are detailed records of individual student achievement and that individual education plans contain relevant and practical targets. Many subjects, such as English, mathematics, art and ICT have developed and use effective 'can do' statements well to clarify both what students can do and where they need to go next. The whole-school systems, however, used to measure and analyse overall performance and set targets for improvement, still do not identify enough ongoing progress for the majority of students. This means that several parents are unclear as to how much progress their children are actually making and staff cannot set meaningful whole-subject or school targets to drive improvement further. Too often, the very real progress that does take place is not suitably described and celebrated.
44. A major strength has been the way in which the school, and in particular the headteacher, has recruited, developed and retained staff to ensure the improvement of teaching and learning and encourage curriculum development. Very good training opportunities contribute to this, as does the good teacher and teaching assistant induction process. There is a good performance management system within the school and this underlies the very good professional support offered to teachers and assistants alike. The school has been particularly successful in enabling teaching assistants to take further training. The fact that these people have chosen to return to the school in various roles, such as teaching, is something of which the school can be justly proud.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,268,370	Balance from previous year	25,216
Total expenditure	1,259,490	Balance carried forward to the next	34,095
Expenditure per pupil	12,223		

45. The school manages its finances well. The bursar acts as a very professional and successful member of the management team, providing a very good linkage between budget decisions and the school's long- and short-term planning. The links between the governing body and the senior managers are strong and ensure that money is spent well and that unnecessary surpluses or deficits do not occur in any part of the school budget. Care is taken to ensure that expenditure is always considered in the light of the best value to be obtained.
46. The aids to learning, upon which the school can now build, include a stable and well-qualified staff, who are well supported by senior managers of high quality and commitment in academic and pastoral work. This provides a strong basis for good improvement in the future. There are potential barriers to further improvement, including a lack of clarity of admissions to the school, which means that the range of student needs is becoming increasingly diverse and more complex to meet. In addition, improvements in accommodation and the curriculum for students Post 16, needs to be addressed promptly if they are to make better progress.

## WORK-RELATED LEARNING

### **What is the effectiveness of work-related learning?**

Provision in work-related learning is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students receive very good guidance on career choices after school and Post 16.
- The comprehensive work experience programme ensures that all students experience the world of work.
- There is too little opportunity for students to take vocational courses or run a mini-enterprise.

### **Commentary**

47. Work-related learning is still developing and, although there are some very good aspects of provision, some essential elements are not in place. The school has the services of a full-time Connexions advisor who undertakes some high quality work to ensure success and relevance in the next stage of their education and career. This individual careers support is supplemented by formal careers lessons for Year 10 students. Consideration of careers is also included in other subjects, such as geography and life skills, for students Post-16. Students have a clear idea of what they are going to do next.
48. All students have work experience, which is very carefully organised by the school to ensure that it is meaningful and useful to them. Local businesses offer experience in retail, catering and horticulture, for example, and two students are on one day per week long-term placements, which they thoroughly enjoy. After leaving school or the Post-16 provision, some students this year will enter carefully chosen work programmes and others will have part-time college placements or residential provision.

49. The school does offer some vocational education. There is a high-quality plumbing and electrical course one afternoon per week for four students who show a good aptitude and enthusiasm. Five students also attend a college course, which includes childcare and beauty, but this is currently too demanding. Life-skills for students Post 16 also contains some vocational elements. Mini-enterprises to help students practice running businesses are not currently in place, although this is being explored. There are not, however, enough vocational courses to choose from that are relevant to the aptitudes of different students. The school, the Post-16s provision and local colleges have not yet resolved how to provide the necessary courses to give students the choice, training and experience they need for their future work.

# PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3, 4 AND POST 16

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievements by the end of Year 11 and Post 16 are very good because of some very good English teaching.
- The very good English curriculum provides students with a wide range of interesting activities.
- Assessment and target-setting are not broken down into small enough steps to show the good progress students make.
- Strong and knowledgeable leadership by the co-ordinator is driving the subject forward.

#### Commentary

50. Achievement is good, overall. It is very good in speaking and listening throughout the school and satisfactory in writing. By the end of Year 9 and for students Post 16 achievement is good, whilst students in Years 10 and 11 achieve very well. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection where achievement in English, especially in Years 7 to 9 was a key issue. Teaching has improved, as have students' attitudes to their work. Improvement in writing is satisfactory.
51. Students, including those with English as an additional language, achieve very well in speaking and listening because they are given very good opportunities in and out of school to develop their language skills. Good questioning by teachers enables students of all abilities to show what they know; for example, when discussing the emotional effects of a character's disappearance. Drama is used very effectively, enabling students to use gesture and expression as well as voice to convey meaning, as in a brief version of *Romeo and Juliet* during a school assembly. By Year 10, students have the confidence to give short talks about issues or items that are important to them, whilst their peers listen closely. Students in Year 11 modified their behaviour because they were captivated by a power-point presentation on advertising. The social use of language is developed as students, including those Post-16, make regular visits to the community for a range of activities, including shopping and visiting restaurants. The direct focus on language skills through the input of speech therapists or trained support staff helps develop the skills of individuals, including those with English as an additional language who have difficulty with expression or comprehension.
52. Achievement in reading is good across the school, but very good in Years 10 and 11 because students are using their reading for a wide range of purposes. Books, which are age-appropriate and in good condition, motivate students to read. However, they do not have regular, planned opportunities to visit the well-stocked library to encourage more reading at home. Students in all years take turns to read short passages from class readers. Staff are good role models when reading aloud and volunteers and teaching assistants promote the enjoyment of reading one to one, developing the skills of more reluctant readers. Students in Years 10 and 11 extend their skills at college as well as at school. Symbols support the written word for many students, whilst more able boys and girls use their skills to good effect as they seek information from reference books or the Internet.

53. Achievement in writing is satisfactory, overall, and good in Years 10 and 11. By the end of Year 9 students spell most common words correctly. More able students write in full sentences, but with limited variety in their choice of vocabulary. Students with complex needs select statements to match pictures and build up a short sequence of sentences. ICT is used well to present work in a variety of ways. By Year 11, students of all abilities are writing for many purposes such as diaries, dialogue and letters, although they have too few opportunities for extended writing. Post-16 students also continue to do well and show this by completing journey surveys, for example, or writing about what they will do in the future. The work of most students is neat and legible. However, the school has not established clear whole-school guidelines about handwriting or the regular encouragement of cursive writing.
54. Teaching and learning are good, overall. They are very good in Years 10 and 11 where the co-ordinator's influence is strongest. Teachers plan lessons well so that students of all abilities are fully engaged in learning, although there are exceptions to this when occasionally work is too easy. Good relationships and humour are used to good effect so that students try hard, and lively activities such as Chinese Whispers provide good motivation. Where teaching is best, staff work together seamlessly to encourage students independence and skill, sometimes using symbols to support understanding. The positive effects of the literacy strategy are evident in all lessons, especially in the very good opportunities for students to review their work at the end of the lesson. Students use computers with confidence and those with visual impairment are helped by adapted print and good support. Teachers have high expectations of themselves and students.
55. English is very well led and managed by a very well qualified co-ordinator and is improving rapidly. Teachers are encouraged and supported to be innovative, which has resulted in a broad and rich curriculum. For example, there are visits to theatres, including The National Theatre, book and poetry days and good use of multi-media to record performances. These activities also contribute strongly to promoting students' social and cultural development. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning well and has some good systems in place to record assessment. However, the small steps students make are not evident in the systems used to set subject targets or show progress over time to drive further improvement.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

56. There are very good opportunities for students to reinforce their skills of language and literacy elsewhere in curriculum. Key vocabulary in almost all subjects is taught carefully and many opportunities are provided to write. Staff model good conversational skills and use role-play well. Extensive visits out of school broaden social vocabulary and reinforce speaking for a range of purposes. There are good opportunities for students to use reading skills, for example, consulting Fathers 4 Justice newspaper reports in personal and social education or researching Tudor monarchs in history. The good knowledge of staff, including training in dyslexia, supports language and literacy skills across the school.

### **Modern foreign languages**

57. Provision in Spanish and French was sampled. Two lessons were observed, the co-ordinator was interviewed and pupils work scrutinised.
58. The observations and scrutiny indicate that modern foreign languages are a strong and improved aspect of provision. Students study **Spanish** until they are fourteen and are taught by a native Spanish speaker. Lessons are very well organised and lively and students evidently enjoy speaking the language, which they do with great enthusiasm and a good accent. After this age they are taught **French** by a skilled French teacher who also introduces a little Russian and even Latin, to give them some experience of what other languages are like. Lessons are exciting and varied with plenty of games to keep students motivated. Some students are also taught French Post 16. Students' work indicates that they are taught a wide range of practical phrases and it is evident that they are keen to show how much they can do. The subject is well managed and achievement is at least in line with expectations. French

and Spanish contribute significantly to the multicultural provision of the school, although trips to France or Spain do not take place.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is always good and often very good, providing students with a very positive experience that assists in their good achievement at both key stages.
- The subject is well led and is developing a good range of externally accredited courses.
- Staff use mathematics well in many other subjects.
- There is not enough discussion with students about their targets and what they need to do next.
- Some ICT is used within mathematics, but it lacks work on data-handling.

### **Commentary**

59. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, and teaching and achievement are now good throughout the school.
60. Achievement is good for all groups of students as a result of good teaching. By the age of fourteen, higher-attaining students who entered the school with a background of non-attendance or disjointed experiences of school, develop good concentration and a real wish to succeed. They enjoy being challenged and respond well to work that is individualised and highly motivating. Students with the most complex difficulties also achieve well with regard to attention and develop a sound knowledge of basic number, shape and measurement. They use equipment well to assist them in adding to 20 and recognise numbers in both symbols and words.
61. During Years 10 and 11 all students have the opportunity to undertake modules for accredited courses up to GCSE. In the current year, the school realistically predicts that seven students will gain an entry level GCSE and two are predicted an E or F grade in the full GCSE. Students with complex learning difficulties have the opportunity to demonstrate basic skills in life-related mathematics and these develop well as they progress into Post 16. The school's emphasis upon practical mathematics ensures that students leave with appropriate awareness of money, shopping, weighing and measuring.
62. Teaching is always good and is often very good. Planning is good and builds upon teachers' excellent knowledge of students so that they set appropriate targets, backed by good resources. In one very good Year 8 lesson the class, with a wide range of learning difficulties, worked on the recognition of numbers up to 20. A brisk pace and good humour, were used very well to involve the full range of students, with no time to switch off or misbehave. Questioning by the teacher always sought to challenge students at their own level to help move them on. Two students, who quickly grasped the idea, were given different work to extend and challenge them. Two students who had severe and complex difficulties were very well supported through good communication strategies and a strong emphasis on tactile techniques, such as forming letters with sand. Teaching assistants of the very highest quality, supported students and maintained the very good working atmosphere. Students' achievements, recorded during the lesson, provided a good basis for setting appropriate work in future lessons so that progress, however small, is built upon methodically.
63. Leadership and the management of mathematics is good, with some very good features. The co-ordinator presents a good role model for students and staff by being enthusiastic and well organised. A wide range of accredited courses are made appropriate to students' different needs, based upon good assessment of what they have achieved. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now good. The department's philosophy of celebrating what

a student can do, rather than focusing on their difficulties, helps them with their personal development. This contributes to students' feelings of self worth and independence and so prepares them well for college and the world of work. For students Post-16, a focus on everyday needs is entirely appropriate. Although staff keep very detailed records of what students have achieved, and there are examples of very good practice, there is still not enough sharing of detailed targets with students to increase their motivation even further. ICT has been incorporated well into mathematics, but it is not available as a tool at all times. In particular, there is not enough work on data collection and handling.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. There are many instances of mathematics being used very well in other subjects. In art, clay work gives opportunities for weighing and judging the temperature of the kiln, while considerable work on two- and three-dimensional shapes takes place in drawing and painting. Design, technology and science supports measuring and estimating well, and science also reinforces the entry of data into tables. Staff are keen to use every opportunity to build on number, spatial and data-handling skills, all of which add to the school's emphasis on mathematics as a practical subject with many everyday uses.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**, overall.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students access the subject well because its presentation in lessons is practical and exploratory.
- The high quality of resources and the accommodation contribute significantly to the good quality of teaching and learning in lessons.
- The skill and enthusiasm of the temporary teacher and the higher-level teaching assistant are generating enthusiasm and interest in the subject across the school.
- Consistent and effective use is made of ICT to support learning in lessons.
- The assessment of achievement and progress is not sufficiently refined to meet the needs of a diverse range of students.

#### **Commentary**

65. Students' achievements are satisfactory, overall, although there are some examples of good achievement in Years 9 and 11. By the time students reach Year 9 they are developing good investigative habits. They observe experiments carefully and understand terms like 'prediction' and what makes a 'fair test'. These skills are built upon; for example, students in Year 10 understand that ice melts over time at room temperature and learn that 'insulation' slows the melting process. Higher-attaining students plan a fair test, draw an axis and plot a graph to show their results. Year 11 students construct electrical circuits and are familiar with all the features of a circuit; they explain what makes a bulb light up or a buzzer ring. Three students achieved an entry level GCSE this year. However, all students will complete one part of a qualification in this subject. Students enjoy their science lessons and find the investigations great fun.
66. Teaching and learning are always satisfactory and frequently good. The subject benefits from the services of a teacher and a higher-level teaching assistant, both with good subject knowledge. They work well together as a team and this helps to compensate for the fact that the teacher has only recently taken up this appointment in the school. Lessons are prepared well and very good resources are available to support learning in a practical way. An example of this was seen in a Year 9 lesson when students were able to test for starch and contribute to planning an investigation before recording their findings in a table. Lessons in science also provide good opportunities for students to develop their communication and mathematical skills. For example, the construction of tables to record the outcomes of their investigations



and using 5 bar tally charts. Teaching assistants support the students very well; they have clearly identified roles and provide a high level of care for them. They also have a successful and key role in assisting with occasional incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour.

67. In the absence of a science co-ordinator the deputy headteacher oversees the management of the subject pending a new appointment. This is a satisfactory arrangement and ensures that the overall planning of lessons is carried out effectively; good support is given to the temporary teacher and the higher-level teaching assistant. The resources and accommodation for the subject are very good. There is very good ICT equipment, which is used well by both the temporary teacher and the higher level teaching assistant in all lessons.
68. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. There has been some improvement in the quality of teaching and more effective use of resources to support learning. The school is aware that the assessment of students' progress and achievement, although satisfactory, does not report progress over time sufficiently well. Improvements are being made in Years 7, 8 and 9, but not yet in Years 10 and 11.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' achievement is good at all stages, with a high level of confidence and enthusiasm.
- Teaching is always good throughout the school, being well planned and delivered with pace and expertise.
- The subject is very well led and, as a result, very good progress has been made over the past year.
- Not enough opportunities are being taken for students to take externally accredited courses.
- New technology and staff enthusiasm has ensured that ICT is being well used across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

69. All students achieve well within ICT. Many arrive at the school with limited knowledge of computers and little experience of using ICT to develop work, present information and communicate. They are quickly introduced to a good range of hardware and computer programs, both within the ICT suite and in classroom lessons. As a result, their motivation grows and so does their confidence. By the age of fourteen they design and produce posters for the school performances, develop slide shows relating to themselves and bar graphs to compare views and preferences. By sixteen they are entering data into spreadsheets, use word processing efficiently and link text, artwork and photographs well. Students working on ICT Post-16 often have a range of learning difficulties, which means that their progress has been slow. However, they too are confident in the use of both computers and the specialist software. Within one very good lesson, these older students received clear guidance and individual targets relating to receiving and sending an e-mail, prepared before the lesson by the teacher. They worked well at their own level, receiving expert advice from skilled teaching assistants and volunteers. Despite the complexity of some learning difficulties experienced by the students, each succeeded at their own target. These targets were checked at the end of the lesson and the next step clearly identified. Some progress was small, but much was significant. However, for every student the enjoyment and satisfaction was very good indeed.
70. The dramatic developments within ICT, particularly over the past six months, have taken place largely as the result of very good subject leadership. The co-ordinator is a very good practitioner who uses ICT skills well, together with pace and humour, to encourage and develop every student. This enthusiasm is infectious. Staff and students within the ICT department, show an enjoyment of computing and using the Internet that could not be

bettered. The key developments have been establishing very good reliable hardware, together with the refinement of an extremely effective assessment system. Assessment in ICT is very effective. Each stage of the curriculum is broken down into small, meaningful steps, which are identified by 'I can do' statements. These are shared with students, used within each lesson and recorded on a weekly basis. This means that both staff and students know where each individual is and where to move on to next.

71. Students move into externally accredited courses as they progress through the school. These are appropriate for most students and highly motivational. At present there is not a wide enough range of such courses, which means that those students who achieve best do not always have the opportunity to participate in higher level courses that challenge them most effectively. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is already planning to develop such courses in the immediate future.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

72. ICT is used well within many subjects. It helps both to reinforce the skills learnt in the ICT suite and to develop a wider understanding of these other subjects themselves. Thus, within many subjects, such as modern foreign languages and history, the new interactive whiteboards are providing high quality visual stimuli. In other subjects, such as design technology, geography and science, ICT assists with data recording and calculations. In art, personal and social education and performance, ICT is used to present both information and entertainment, such as an assembly on students' progress. ICT has not yet been fully harnessed by all subjects. Mathematics, English, music and art, for instance, have identified areas they wish to develop, and have good examples elsewhere in the curriculum to draw on, but these are not yet in place.

### **HUMANITIES**

73. **Geography** and **history** were sampled and no overall judgements were made. Two history and two geography lessons were observed, the co-ordinator interviewed and students' work scrutinised.
74. On the limited evidence available it seems likely that geography and history have improved since the last inspection, because the quality of teaching is improved and was at least good in all lessons observed. In geography and history, lessons are calm and students well behaved, because the teachers relate very well to students and use good management strategies to keep students with difficulties on task. The one weakness in teaching, which was evident in several lessons, is lack of variety of task and material to suit the different learning needs of students with a wide ability range. This means that one or two students grasp the lesson idea quickly and a few find the work too difficult to understand. This is partly overcome because teachers understand the students very well and keep good individual records and targets, but it still slows the learning of a small minority. Lessons are interesting and lively and both subjects contribute well to developing students' basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. In one lesson, each student built a model of the earth to show the core, mantle and crust and the practical nature of the activity really engaged their interest and understanding. There is a clear contribution to citizenship in history, when students began to understand how laws were changed during the Holocaust and human rights were lost. Subject management is careful and planning is well organised to ensure that there is good continuity of learning from one year to the next. However, because the overall assessment is not recorded in small enough steps, predictions for student progress from year to year are not useful as a tool, either to inform parents of overall progress or to drive further improvement in the two subjects.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory** for all students.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and sometimes excellent and students enjoy their lessons.
- The curriculum is comprehensive and provides a good level of student understanding.
- There are very good links with other areas of the curriculum.
- There is insufficient assessment of what students achieve to help them move forward.

### Commentary

75. Achievement for students aged 12 to 16 years is good in lessons. It is not possible to grade overall achievement as there is no formal assessment of what students can do. Scrutiny of student work shows that they have covered a broad range of topics in line with the locally agreed syllabus, but this is not marked. In lessons, it is evident that students' understanding is in line with that of students in other similar schools. For example, they begin to realise why Hitler might have started the Second World War and what the prejudice towards others and particularly the Jewish religion might have been about. In another lesson they quickly grasped the fundamentals of Jewish initiation rites.
76. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and sometimes inspired. Students are keen to contribute to discussions because teaching is lively and involved them at a level to suit their different needs. Good humour and a calm lively approach to presentation means that students with behavioural difficulties soon calm down and, in one lesson, they quickly became involved in the role-play of a Bar Mitzvah. Excellent use of objects such as the Torah keep students very interested. Skilled use of the interactive whiteboard meant that in one lesson students could be actively involved and show how much they had learned about different religious symbols. The subject contributes very well to geography, history, ICT and English, particularly through the emphasis on discussion. In one lesson the lowest-attaining pupil found the ideas difficult to understand because the work was not suitably adapted to his needs. This is directly related to the lack of assessment. Teachers' and teaching assistants' very good knowledge of students means that in general work is adapted and suitable, but not always.
77. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum is translated well into meaningful lessons, but without formal assessment there is nothing to guide planning for different learning needs. For students aged 14 to 16 the qualification they are working towards guides this more effectively. The co-ordinator does guide the overall curriculum and monitors teachers' planning well, but there is insufficient monitoring of performance and achievement in the subject, and this is unsatisfactory.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, so pupils learn very well.
- Students enjoy their lessons, so they try hard.
- Time for some activities is limited.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

## Commentary

78. Students achieve very well in design and technology. This is because the teacher sets them challenges but also provides the support to ensure that they succeed. Design and technology was judged to be good at the time of the last inspection and it has improved further since that time.
79. Year 8 students show very good progress as they experiment with font size as they design wooden nameplates. More able students use the computer independently, noting the impact of using capital or lower case letters. Students with English as an additional language, or with additional needs such as visual impairment, achieve very well in all years because of very good support and constant reinforcement of language. Students in Year 9 evaluate their work well: 'I used the saw and file to cut and shape plastic. I think my label is very good.' Purposeful activities and good accommodation and resources contribute positively to high achievement and very good behaviour. Tasks are age-appropriate, and this is motivating. Year 10 students assessed bird feeders at a local garden centre before designing and making their own. This included measuring and cutting materials, using a wide range of tools and processes, often independently for more able students. Less able students show high levels of perseverance. For example, boys and girls in Year 11 worked hard to pin their pattern to the material as they made bedroom tidies. 'I'm a good cutter' said one student as she struggled to cut in a straight line. It was not possible to observe food technology but anecdotal and photographic evidence suggest that students achieve equally well in the very well-equipped kitchen.
80. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and is very ably supported in some lessons by a committed and knowledgeable teaching assistant. This teamwork helps ensure that students of all abilities are fully engaged in learning. In a Year 10 lesson, staff continually challenged pupils to be as independent as possible whilst working in a safe environment. A more able student set up the clamp, collected the right saw and cut his wood to size before sanding it. Very good discussion allowed students to realise that the belt sander was not large enough so the problem was overcome by the introduction of an orbital sander and new learning took place. A pupil with visual impairment was provided with ear defenders to overcome his nervousness about the demonstration with the result that he asked to use the sander independently. When teaching is good rather than very good, staff have a tendency to step in too soon to help overcome problems, as was seen when one student was drawing round a flexi-cone. One reason for this is that, with the new timing for the school day, time is limited and there is less opportunity to experiment. The school reports that this has particularly affected food technology, where time to clear up and evaluate work is now very restricted.
81. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is the only teacher and is very motivated to ensure students' high levels of achievement. He has worked very hard to set up an effective workshop using redundant materials from a nearby factory. He leads by example; for example, using model kits to demonstrate structures or using his skills to make scenery for school productions. Assessment within lessons is good, with good record keeping on what students have achieved and the level of support required. This now needs linking to show the small steps different groups of students are making within the school.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is of a high standard, knowledgeable and enthusiastic.
- Students love art and are keen to produce work, express themselves and gain qualifications in the subject.
- The subject leadership is of a very high quality and is responsible for the great success of the subject.
- Opportunities to gain external accreditation are good, but do not yet fully challenge the most able students.
- Lessons are too short to teach the curriculum effectively.

### **Commentary**

82. The teaching of art is very good and a strength of the school. It is characterised by a high level of skill and knowledge on the part of the subject co-ordinator, the very motivational programme that has been designed, and the efficient use of lessons and resources that make the most of the time available. One very good lesson exemplifies the consistently high quality of art teaching within the school. A class of seven Year 8 students, including one from a local mainstream school, undertook to complete their individualised assignments. Most had been preparing name plates in clay. Although some students experienced very significant co-ordination and speaking difficulties, the work and skilled support that was provided ensured that all worked to their fullest potential. Teacher and teaching assistant were available, but never interfered, thus ensuring that the students' own ideas governed the process and choices. The very businesslike atmosphere ensured that the maximum use was made of the hour available and the clear and detailed assessment process ensured that all the students knew where they were and where they needed to go next. A student with writing difficulties was able to use a word processor to explain how they had developed their work, while a student with significant communication difficulties was always given time to think and the 'space' to answer. To ensure a full understanding of the process, the teacher took groups of students to see the kiln, thus indicating the next steps in the production process.
83. As the result of such well planned and individually focused work, all students express a real joy in art and work hard during their lessons. They are also keen to move on to accredited courses, within which their work is celebrated and certificates received. Although the work carried out and the accreditations gained within art are very good, there are currently no opportunities for the most talented students to undertake full GCSE work. The quality of teaching and learning suggests that this is now a strong possibility.
84. Despite very strong leadership, some opportunities have been missed to fully harness the power of the computer within art. The co-ordinator is aware of this and only awaits more up-to-date machines to fully develop this aspect of the subject. Her experience in literacy development means that the subject does provide a strong back-up to the work of the English department. Her relationship with students is of a very high standard and she works closely with the art therapist to ensure that the pastoral success of this subject matches the quality of the work produced. The current timetable has recently, and effectively, been re-designed. However, it now places some constraints on the time available within art and this is a pity. The subject is often taught in blocks of one-hour duration and a little more time would ensure a fuller experience by all students.

85. **Music** was sampled. Music makes a good contribution to performance within the school and contributes well to students' self-esteem.
86. Only one lesson of music was seen and it was not possible to gauge the achievement of students. However, video evidence and discussion with students indicated that music makes a very strong contribution to performance within the school and, through that, to students' independence and self-esteem. Staff have good relationships with students and, as a result, students are keen to learn, particularly to develop skills relating to composing, performing and recording. The co-ordinators are new to the subject and musical provision throughout the school is still developing. However, the department's plans are highly imaginative and, in their emphasis on production skills, totally appropriate to the students at Shaftesbury. The plans are detailed and envisage the development of a facility strongly supported by ICT and closely linked to drama and movement. The assessment procedures that are developing are also strong and indicative of a wish to link performance to the skills required within the music curriculum.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

87. Physical education was sampled, one lesson was observed, the co-ordinator was interviewed and reports and the subject file were scrutinised. Provision, overall, is unsatisfactory because not enough time is allocated to the subject, except for students in Year 8 who have additional swimming lessons. This means that students have insufficient time to exercise and too few opportunities during the school day to learn new skills and to improve their stamina and co-ordination. No overall judgements can be made about teaching and learning. The one lesson seen was good and students helped lead the warm-up session and had good opportunities to demonstrate their throwing and catching skills using chest or bounce passes. Firm persuasion encouraged all pupils to complete circuits of the playground and join in all activities.
88. The co-ordinator is on extended leave of absence and the subject is being overseen by two members of staff who have good subject knowledge. Planning is not detailed enough, however, to show how skills and knowledge are developed over time. Assessment is not sufficiently well developed to support planning, so that individual students can be helped to move forward at a pace to suit them. However, teachers and teaching assistants know their students well and make lessons relevant. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory, but windows along both sides of the hall restrict some activities and there is insufficient wall space, either indoors or outside, to encourage and improve ball skills. Good use is made of the leisure centre and the swimming pool at the nearby secondary school. The school benefits from a good adventure playground, and additional opportunities are available for adventurous activities such as caving, abseiling or climbing during residential visits. After-school sports clubs do not always develop students' skills sufficiently, although students have good opportunities to learn from specialist coaches, for example, football or basketball. There are some opportunities to compete against other schools in a range of sporting activities, and all students take part in sports day.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**. Citizenship is developed as an integral part of that programme.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has very good up-to-date policies, which cover all aspects of sex and relationships education, drugs and alcohol abuse.
- The subject develops social skills very effectively and an awareness of other people and cultures.
- The school has successfully achieved a Healthy Schools' Award.
- There has been no formal evaluation of the subject or its co-ordination.

### **Commentary**

89. The school provides a very effective personal, social and educational programme, which includes the development of citizenship. Students from Years 7 to 11 experience opportunities to develop confidence and responsibility in all activities throughout each day. The ethos of the school is essentially built upon the importance of caring and supporting one another, combined with developing an awareness of other cultures. For example, when examining a map of the world, students relate it to the individual cultures of others in the group or they learn why racism is wrong and give reasons why it is unacceptable. They develop a very good knowledge of how to identify drugs and other harmful substances. Citizenship is taught in several subjects, including geography, history and life skills. There are regular meetings with parents so that they understand what the school is trying to achieve in lessons. The school also involves a nurse to support the learning in some aspects of the programme. An additional and very valuable resource is the school counsellor, who knows every student in the school and is available to provide a 'drop-in' service as well as dealing with referrals from teaching and support staff.
90. Both the teaching and learning in the lessons observed were always good and sometimes very good. Lessons across the school are planned very carefully, showing what it is anticipated that students will learn and how their individual needs will be met. Activities are very well prepared, with appropriate resources to hand, and the different activities well timed. Very capable teaching support staff are well briefed and support students' learning very well. For example, in one very good lesson in Year 9, students started with a 'Brain Gym' exercise before analysing what makes a 'healthy drink by testing different fruits. These activities support the development of students' communication skills and enable all students to be involved and to make contributions. Relationships in lessons are very good and all staff are adept at dealing with individual difficulties whether they are behavioural challenges, embarrassment or lack of understanding and communication.
91. The citizenship programme is new and still developing. The two co-ordinators, who work well together, are committed to further improving the resources and training in citizenship. Evaluation of the quality of PSHCE or students' progress by management has not taken place and this is planned for development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*



*In a special school such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*