

Shaftesbury High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102260
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	307948
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	112
6th form	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Murphy
Headteacher	Mr Paul Williams
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
School address	Headstone Lane Harrow HA3 6LE
Telephone number	020 8428 2482
Fax number	020 8420 2361

Age group	11-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Shaftesbury School provides for students who have statements of special educational needs for a range of difficulties. They include, moderate and severe learning difficulties, physical and communication difficulties and behaviour, social and emotional difficulties for which the school received specialist status in September 2007. A small, but increasing number of students have autistic syndrome disorders (ASD). Provision to support students up until the age of 19 was approved in September 2004. Students come from a variety of social and economical backgrounds. Just under a half of students are from white British families with the remainder coming from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest number coming from Asian families. Just over a half of students are boys and currently there are six students looked after by the local authority. The school has its own Professional Development Centre and provides accredited training for teaching assistants. The school has achieved a range of recognized awards, including Healthy Schools, Investors in People, Artsmark and Sportsmark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where leaders and managers put students' well-being and achievement at the heart of all planning and promote the highest quality of care and education. The forward thinking and inspirational headteacher has a clear strategic vision for improvement, which is shared by the whole school. Highly competent deputies and middle managers effectively ensure the smooth running of the school. Leadership and management are very effectively distributed across the school and individual strengths are efficiently maximized. There is a clearly focused and motivating ethos in the school directly related to improving the life chances of all students. The provision for the pastoral support of students is outstanding. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'My child has improved so much since joining the school. She looks forward to going and enjoys her learning. All students are given the opportunity of reaching their full potential.' There are outstanding partnerships with external support agencies, schools, colleges and the community, that ensures students' needs and well-being are very well met. Self-evaluation strategies are very effective. Monitoring and review includes the whole school community and development planning clearly shows the school has a clear understanding of what needs to be done and how to achieve it.

Students' standards vary widely, but overall are well below the national average. A very small number of students complete GCSE courses at a local secondary school. Given their starting points, and the nature of their learning difficulties, the achievement and progress of the great majority of students is outstanding. This success gives them confidence in their social interactions and enables them to make choices and develop their independent learning. All students have challenging individual targets, which most successfully achieve. By the time students leave school at sixteen or after the sixth form, they have achieved a relevant variety of accredited qualifications and have learned useful personal skills to aid them in their life after school. Students' outstanding progress in their academic and personal development is due to excellent relationships, outstanding care, support and guidance and the good teaching and excellent support they receive for their individual needs. Through its own careful monitoring the school knows where the very best teaching and learning practice is to be found and understands that it needs to be shared more effectively to ensure that the high standards of provision and student achievement are maintained. The tracking, recording and analysis of students' progress has effectively developed and can illustrate small steps of progress and progression in students' learning.

The curriculum is outstanding. It offers a wide, interesting and challenging range of learning activities that effectively meets the needs of students and contributes effectively towards their outstanding achievement. Vocational and enterprise skills are effectively developed and there are opportunities for work related learning as students get older. The curriculum effectively supports students' outstanding personal development and visits into the community, work in mainstream schools and visiting specialists very effectively support their learning. Students thoroughly enjoy their experiences on school journeys, which greatly contribute towards their learning and personal development. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students have very positive attitudes towards each other and their behaviour is good. Students have excellent attitudes towards their learning and they say that lessons are their favourite aspect of the school. The school has greatly improved since the last inspection and all issues have been effectively addressed through thorough improvement planning and subsequent action. Governors are very well informed and take an active part in monitoring,

self-evaluation and in the strategic management of the school. They clearly know their school well. Parents are regularly consulted on school development, although the school is aware of the need to encourage and support some parents more than others to take a more active role in their children's learning. Leadership and management are undoubtedly having a very positive impact on the learning provision, which is enabling all students to achieve and make continued excellent progress. The capacity to improve even further is excellent.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision is relatively new and is developing well. Students study a programme of transitional life-skills and have good and increasing access to appropriate activities, work-related opportunities and accredited courses. Their increasing maturity and confidence is enabling progressive independence and the school effectively prepares them for life after school. The school provides excellent guidance and support for students' next steps and is aware of the need to ensure there is progression and challenge waiting for those students who go on to attend further education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the very best practice in teaching and learning is effectively shared across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' academic progress throughout the school is outstanding. This progress is the result of the wide range of learning opportunities available to them that meets their individual needs and enables them to improve by small incremental steps. Students make particularly good progress in their reading and communication and develop a clearer understanding of how to use mathematical skills in everyday situations. Enterprise projects fully utilise students' core skills and understanding and fully supports their economic well-being which is outstanding. Students make outstanding progress in their personal development and learn essential social skills that fully support their citizenship development. A small number of students successfully reintegrate into mainstream schools and others achieve as well as they can before leaving school with a range of relevant accredited qualifications to continue their education in local colleges.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. As students move through the school they rapidly grow in confidence and self esteem. All aspects of keeping healthy are clearly understood and students make healthy choices from the nutritious meals at lunchtime, and by engaging in the wide range of sporting activities on offer. Their very positive attitudes are reflected in their good attendance, good behaviour and in their enthusiasm for learning in all lessons. Students' relationships with staff and each other are outstanding due to the excellent role models that staff provide. Students make an outstanding contribution to their community through a variety of fund-raising events, through the work of the school council, and by helping

and supporting each other. As one student said, 'I would not change anything here. I have friends, staff help me and I enjoy coming.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall, with examples of outstanding practice where the wide and varied learning needs of the students are effectively met. This results in students making consistently good or better progress in lessons. The quality of classroom practice is regularly monitored and good support is given to improve practice. However, the very best practice could be more effectively shared across the school. The outstanding relationships between staff and students provide a very positive learning environment, where students are challenged and encouraged to do their best. A parent said, 'My daughter has matured and calmed down and is now able to express herself. She has become a young adult with her own views.' Ongoing feedback and support in lessons by teachers and very effective teaching assistants ensures students know how they might improve. Excellent teamwork and effective use of resources, particularly interactive whiteboards and information and communication technology (ICT) positively supports students' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum very effectively contributes towards students' outstanding academic and personal progress. There are excellent opportunities to enrich students' learning, through the wide range of school visits, after school activities and through the opportunities to attend mainstream schools and residential school journeys. These all very effectively promote students' enjoyment and achievement. Curriculum leaders ensure planning is relevant to students' needs and skills are built up progressively from year to year as students move through the school. Outstanding links with schools and colleges make a very positive contribution to students' academic and personal development. The effective promotion of the key skills in communication, literacy, numeracy, personal and social skills, and particularly ICT skills, has a very positive impact on students' progress and their preparation for life after school. There are increasingly relevant opportunities for accreditation and opportunities for higher attainers to follow GCSE courses in a mainstream school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Clearly understood practices and procedures ensure students are safe and secure while encouraging their personal independence. The pastoral support team has developed outstanding practices that ensure the very effective care and well-being of all students. There is outstanding teamwork between teachers, teaching assistants and mentors. Together with the excellent partnerships with external support agencies, school systems ensure that there are consistent approaches and effective support for all students. Students and parents know that all staff

have their best interests at heart. One parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'The staff are very caring and cater for all my daughter's needs. There has always been a close relationship between the school and home.' The breakfast club offers students a nutritious start to the day as well as providing an occasion for social interaction. Students' academic progress and personal development are monitored and recorded very effectively and individual targets are supported by improvement strategies. Students know what they need to do to improve and they receive effective guidance on their future opportunities. The transition into the sixth form or college is very carefully planned and supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has effectively led the school through a series of improvements that have had a positive impact upon students' achievement. All staff positively embrace their responsibilities and are consistent in their dedication and care to the students. The impact of their work is clearly reflected in the outstanding care, guidance and support for students and the excellent academic and personal progress they make. Effective consultation and self-evaluation ensure that areas for improvement and strategies for action are clearly identified. High expectations are made of staff, their work is valued and morale is high. Professional development and training is of the highest order and promotes personal development as well as contributing towards meeting the ever changing needs of the students. Teaching assistants have a range of responsibilities and very effectively contribute to students' achievement and well-being. A parent wrote, 'The school is very well run by the headteacher, deputy headteachers and a dedicated and committed team of staff.'

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 May 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Shaftesbury High School, Harrow, HA3 6LE

Thank you for welcoming me into your school and a special thanks to the school council who talked about their activities and what they liked about the school. You obviously enjoy coming to school and working in your lessons and you all get on with each other very well. I agree with you and your parents: Shaftesbury is an excellent school that works hard at supporting your needs and ensures that you make the very best progress in your learning. The school knows what it has to do to make things even better for you and you can help by continuing to respect and support each other's differences and always challenging yourself to try your very best in lessons.

I particularly liked the fact that:

- all staff care about your progress; they listen and treat you with respect
- you understand how to be safe and healthy and you feel secure while at school
- your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent
- you get outstanding support and guidance and good teaching which helps to prepare you very well for when you leave the school
- the school puts your care and personal needs first and you are encouraged to achieve as well as you can
- the school has excellent partnerships with schools, colleges and support agencies to ensure your individual needs are well met
- the school effectively supports the training needs of all staff
- the breakfast club offers you an excellent start to the day and lunches are nutritious
- the headteacher is a very effective leader and he is extremely well supported by a dedicated team of teachers and support staff
- school governors take an active part in school improvement.

The school knows it can improve even further by:

- ensuring the very best teaching and learning in the school is shared more effectively to ensure you keep making excellent progress.

Your school production was brilliant by the way. Congratulations to everyone who took part. I enjoyed my time in your school and I wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Mike Smith

Lead Inspector