

Shelley College, A Specialist Centre for Science

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107771
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	336947
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Ms Julie Price Grimshaw

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,396
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Alwyn Cooper
Headteacher	Mr John McNally
Date of previous school inspection	September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons taught by 30 teachers and spent over half of the inspection time observing learning. Meetings were held with governors, staff, and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at students' work, improvement planning, a range of policy documents, national published assessment data and the school's own data. They also analysed 228 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

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

- students' current levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 4, particularly in English and mathematics
- the effectiveness of the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision
- the impact of recent changes at senior management level.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average school. The great majority of students are of White British heritage and very few students speak a home language other than English. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average, as is the proportion of students entitled to a free school meal. The school holds several awards including Healthy Schools, Bronze and Silver Eco Awards and the International Green Flag Award.

There have been significant changes to the school's leadership and management since the previous inspection; a new head of sixth form was appointed in September 2009 and a new headteacher took up post in January 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The mature, sensible and friendly nature of the students is immediately apparent to visitors to Shelley College. Their behaviour is exemplary; they treat each other, and adults in the school, with a great deal of respect. In this very positive learning environment, students achieve exceptionally well. From above average starting points in Year 9 they make good progress to reach high standards by the end of Year 11. This is due to good quality teaching, a good curriculum and students' excellent attitudes towards learning.

The outstanding quality of the school's care, guidance and support makes a significant contribution to all aspects of students' personal development. The meticulous attention paid to safeguarding helps to ensure that students feel safe at all times. They have an extremely good awareness of issues related to healthy living and the majority make a concerted effort to adopt a healthy diet and take regular exercise. The school's work is enhanced through extremely effective partnerships with a large number of external agencies.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and foster very good relationships with students. They use resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), skilfully. The use of assessment to support learning is satisfactory overall. There is some excellent practice but this is not yet sufficiently widespread. In addition, the school has rightly identified the use of assessment data to track closely students' progress in individual subjects as an area for development.

The curriculum meets the needs of most students very effectively. There is a good range of subjects and courses on offer that cater for students' interests. Nevertheless, curricular provision for the less able students is underdeveloped.

The school's sixth form is good overall; significant progress has been made in several areas, including outcomes for students, since the previous inspection. The new sixth form leader has quickly become established in his role and is now beginning to drive further improvement through a variety of new strategies and initiatives.

The new headteacher has wasted no time in assessing the school's current situation and working with other senior leaders to form an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work have now been set up and middle leaders are beginning to play a full

and active role in these systems. This, together with the school's success in addressing issues identified during the previous inspection, means that there is good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - disseminating best practice in the use of assessment to support learning
 - developing the use of assessment data to track precisely students' progress.
- Develop the curriculum for the less able students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Attainment has been consistently high since the last inspection in spite of a slight dip in standards in English and mathematics in 2009. Inspection evidence indicates that this issue has now been addressed and that attainment in these subjects is returning to the high levels seen over recent years. Attainment in science is particularly high, with the proportion of A* and A grades at GCSE being over twice the national average.

Students' positive attitudes to learning are a key factor in their good progress. They have a real enthusiasm for learning, are keen to express their views and are happy to support each other in the classroom. This was observed in an English lesson where students evaluated each other's work particularly well. Most students are able to work well independently, as seen in a design and technology lesson where students took responsibility for their learning and worked individually at a brisk pace. All students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress; the school has worked successfully to close the gap in achievement between boys and girls. Although there is no significant difference between the achievements of students of different abilities, the school recognises the potential of developing the curriculum for the less able students in improving their attainment and progress further.

Overall, students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. They have a clear awareness of, and respect for, cultural and spiritual diversity. Attendance is above average and students are consistently punctual. Students' very well-developed literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, combined with engagement in a variety of enterprise activities, mean that they are exceptionally well prepared for the future. Students relish the opportunity to take on responsibilities within school and are extensively involved in a range of activities within the local community, for example, acting as local Sport Youth ambassadors and working with Kirklees Youth Council.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is mainly good or better, with none that is inadequate. Teachers have a genuine desire to get the best out of their students and they work well to support learning. In the main, they have high expectations of their students and focus on motivating them to succeed. Teachers interact with students very well and work effectively with support staff. In lessons where teaching is outstanding, staff use a variety of strategies to assess students' progress and use this information very skilfully to plan future learning; in such cases, students' knowledge and understanding develops at a very rapid rate. Similarly, there is some particularly good use of data to track students' ongoing progress. However, in lessons where the use of assessment is less effective; students' progress is often satisfactory rather than good or outstanding.

Students appreciate the good range of subjects and courses offered to them. The school makes every effort to ensure that students are able to follow the programmes of their choice at Key Stage 4. Nevertheless, options and pathways for the school's less able students are not yet sufficiently varied, and the school has already started work to bring about improvements in this area.

Pastoral care is of exceptional quality. Excellent teamwork among all staff means that students, including the most vulnerable, receive all the support they need, particularly in terms of their personal development. The school's strategies to promote and reward good behaviour are consistently applied and extremely successful. Guidance on further education, higher education and careers is first-rate and leads to students developing clear ambitions and high aspirations for the future. 'We couldn't ask for better advice on choices for the future – it's fantastic', was typical of students' comments.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Following changes at senior leadership level, managers are working effectively as a cohesive team with a clear determination to take the school from strength to strength. Their vision for the school's future has been shared with all staff. Subject leaders have responded well to opportunities to play an active role in evaluating provision. There is increased emphasis on gathering data on the achievement of particular groups, which supports the school's good work in promoting equality for all students. Although it is too early to judge the full impact of the leadership's work, improvement planning reflects careful consideration of priorities for development, including those related to teaching and learning.

Governance is good. Governors have expertise in a range of areas and their combined knowledge and awareness enables them to offer challenge and support to the school's leaders. They meet all statutory responsibilities including those related to safeguarding, which is a significant strength of the school's work. The school works well with parents and carers and some excellent work is carried out in partnership with external agencies. This includes a range of very successful initiatives carried out as part of the school's work as a specialist college. For example, community science workshops take place every half term and the school is involved in competitions and challenges organised by local universities. The impact of this work can be seen in success rates for science and in the high profile of science throughout the school.

The school promotes community cohesion well and has made a good start in auditing its provision in this area. Students have a good awareness of diversity in terms of faith and ethnicity as well as a secure understanding of socio-economic contexts. The school deploys resources very effectively and provides outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

Outcomes for students in the sixth form are good. Students make good progress and attainment overall is above average. In 2009, students made particularly good progress and examination results were the best in the school's history. The proportion of A and B grades achieved by students has increased year on year. Success rates and retention rates are both good. Students are mature and thoughtful; they enjoy taking on responsibilities, for example, supporting students in lower year groups. A very high proportion of students secure places at university. Teaching is good throughout the sixth form and the curriculum is well matched to students' needs and interests. There are good facilities for students to study within the school, and the development of the virtual learning environment is having a positive impact on learning.

The recently appointed sixth form leader is very committed and extremely enthusiastic. There is a strong focus on improving outcomes for students, and even though some systems are still in the process of being established, early impact of this work can be seen in the rising trend in students' achievement. Self-evaluation is accurate and effective and resources are well managed.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers are supportive and appreciative of the school. A significant number commented on the very high quality of care and support provided for their children. A few expressed concern regarding the effectiveness of the school's positive behaviour policy; inspectors found that systems for promoting good behaviour worked extremely well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shelley College, A Specialist Centre for Science to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 228 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,396 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	29	136	60	18	8	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	31	154	68	3	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	69	30	138	61	18	8	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	32	135	59	15	7	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	26	152	67	11	5	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	20	142	62	33	14	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	16	146	64	35	15	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	53	23	147	64	8	4	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	26	143	63	19	8	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	29	143	63	12	5	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	13	147	64	34	15	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	21	148	65	12	5	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	30	141	62	15	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Shelley College, A Specialist Centre for Science, Huddersfield, HD8 8NL

On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us when we came to inspect your school recently. I would like to share our main findings with you.

You attend a good school. Some aspects of the school's work are outstanding, notably the quality of care, guidance and support. You told us that the guidance you are given in planning for the future is excellent, and we agree with you. We were very impressed that such a high proportion of sixth form students go on to study at university.

Outcomes for students, both in terms of academic work and personal development, are outstanding. Attainment is high and you make good progress throughout your time at Shelley College. One of the things that impressed us most was your exemplary behaviour. It was obvious to us that as you moved around the school you have an excellent awareness of safety. You are clearly keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and you make an outstanding contribution to the school and local communities. Overall effectiveness of the sixth form is also good. There is an upward trend in the achievement of sixth form students, which is very encouraging.

Teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding. We have suggested that staff focus on the use of assessment in order to promote even better progress in lessons. Although the curriculum is good, we have recommended that it is developed further so that all students' needs are fully met.

Your headteacher is strongly committed to working with staff to ensure that your school builds on its strengths. We are delighted that you are proud to be students at Shelley College and wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ms Julie Price Grimshaw
Lead inspector

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