

# Shenfield High School

Alexander Lane, Shenfield, Brentwood, CM15 8RY

**Inspection dates** 11–12 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher and school leaders have reversed the recent decline in standards. Students are making good progress within the school and recent examination results show that standards are rising rapidly in most subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving rapidly as a result of effective action by school leaders.
- Governors have a good understanding of their school and monitor the quality of teaching and the achievement of all students closely. They have the necessary skills and expertise to ensure that school leaders drive up standards further.
- When leading teaching, the headteacher and senior leaders have instilled an ethos of high aspiration and high expectations within the school, which is recognised and respected by staff, students and parents.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of the students and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Provision within the sixth form is good. The sixth form is well led and students are making good progress, feel safe and have the necessary skills for life beyond school.
- The behaviour and safety of students is good. Students enjoy coming to school and wear their uniform with pride. Students feel safe in school and parents have confidence that the school has equipped them with the skills and knowledge they need to keep safe.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is some variation in the quality of teaching, in a few subjects.
- A small minority of students do not always demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. For example, in the sixth form a few students do not take advantage of the opportunities for private study.
- The literacy policy has yet to have an effect in all areas of the school.
- Overall attendance is still below national figures although improving.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 44 lessons, of which 12 were in the sixth form, to observe behaviour and the quality of teaching.
- Eight observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspection team looked carefully at the quality of work in students' books in order to assess progress.
- The inspection team took into account 158 responses to the online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and 97 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team met with governors, a representative from the local authority and the School Improvement Partner. They also met with senior and middle leaders and different groups of students, including those in the sixth form and those that follow an alternative curriculum.
- The inspection team analysed and scrutinised the school's self-evaluation documentation, which included evidence from governors' minutes, school policies and progress information.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of students in the school and when attending external providers were examined by inspectors.

## Inspection team

Pete Sewell, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
David New	Additional Inspector
Peter Devonish	Additional Inspector
Rebecca Hawkes	Additional Inspector
Neil Stanley	Additional Inspector

*Pete Sewell is appointed as an Additional Inspector, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006*

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Shenfield High School is a larger than average-sized secondary school.
- The school population is mainly White British with a lower-than-average proportion of students from other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is 14.7%, which is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students (those known to be eligible for the pupil premium) is 17.7% which is below the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A small minority of students in Year 11 follow an alternative curriculum. These students attend vocational courses at BEP, Motorvation and Havering College for part of the week.
- The school enters students for the core science examinations at the end of Year 10.
- The headteacher is supported by a School Improvement Partner.
- Since the last inspection the school has appointed a literacy coordinator.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen further the quality of teaching and learning across the school to outstanding by:
  - ensuring that the small minority of teachers that do not currently check students' progress regularly enough do so, and provide intervention where necessary
  - fully applying the literacy policy across the school in those subjects that have not yet done this.
- Improve the behaviour across the school by:
  - ensuring that all students adopt the positive attitudes to behaviour demonstrated by the vast majority of students
  - rigorously monitoring attendance and using the school systems effectively to ensure that rates continue to improve
  - promoting opportunities for more private study in the sixth form.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations and has communicated these effectively to staff, students and parents. There is a real sense of 'Team Shenners' among all school staff, who have tremendous pride in their school and recognise the changes that she has brought about over the last two years. The staff are overwhelmingly positive about the future and have confidence in the current leadership of the school.
- School leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is performing, its areas of strength and areas where further improvement is needed. This has enabled them to be meticulous in their approach to school improvement. As a result, standards are rising rapidly.
- School leaders have acted decisively since the last inspection, to eradicate any inadequate teaching and to support any teaching which is not yet solidly good, through a programme of focused professional development. As a consequence, the quality of teaching is improving rapidly and students are making good progress.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively in supporting disadvantaged students. The school funds a variety of strategies to support these students, such as the Oasis Centre, summer schools and a home liaison officer. As a result, these students are making better-than-expected progress across the school and the gap in achievement between them and their peers is closing rapidly in most subjects.
- The curriculum offered by the school meets the needs of all students. A small minority of students that follow the alternative curriculum are complimentary about the courses they attend. They are making good progress. A number who were in danger of permanent exclusion have managed to remain within full-time education because of the quality and breadth of provision. The school promotes values of tolerance, respect and equal opportunities through an extensive tutor programme, religious education lessons and assemblies. Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Middle leaders are well placed to drive through improvements in their own areas. They have been given the necessary training and support by senior leaders to hold teachers to account and a relentless focus on achievement has resulted in standards rising in most subjects.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. These were tested by the inspection team and the school was able to demonstrate the impact of actions taken to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are secure. This is also the case for those students that attend off-site provision where their attendance and progress are carefully and regularly monitored and swift action taken when necessary.
- The school works closely with a representative from Essex local authority and a School Improvement Partner. This support has been effective. The school has commissioned a number of recent reports from external agencies to examine the effectiveness of sixth form provision, pupil premium spending, special needs provision and school leadership. School leaders and governors have used recommendations from these reviews to further strengthen their view of their own performance and focus on areas for future improvement.
- The school has appointed staff with expertise in careers and guidance to ensure that all students have access to relevant and current advice. Parents and students feel that this guidance has been effective in ensuring that students make sensible choices about their future.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have an impressive knowledge of the school and can clearly state the many strengths and areas where further improvement is necessary. The Chair of the Governing Body shares the headteacher's ambitions for the school and provides effective support and challenge.
  - Governors have a clear overview of performance management. They understand the importance of holding teachers to account for the progress of students. They also hold senior leaders to account for their role in securing improvements in the quality of teaching and the achievement of all students. They have been actively involved in the development of 'pen portraits' to show the overall effectiveness of

teachers and have linked this to pay progression. They actively reward good teaching and withhold progression if performance is not improving.

- Governors have been trained to use and understand school information, both in the main school and the sixth form, and can now use this confidently to check the progress of different groups of students and hold leaders to account.
- The Chair of the Governing Body has ensured that all governors have received appropriate safeguarding training, and in some cases safer-recruitment training. They regularly review the school's safeguarding arrangements and fully understand their responsibilities in this area.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Students conduct themselves in a polite and respectful manner around school. The inspection team were greeted warmly when entering lessons and students speak confidently and with pride about their school.
- Students treat the school environment with respect and there was little litter seen during the inspection. During transition times between lessons, and at lunch and break times, students were calm and respectful towards each other and staff. Students appreciate the positive relationships they have with teachers and commented on the impact this has on their learning and enjoyment of school.
- There are a large number of activities, notably sport and musical, on offer at lunchtimes which some students take full advantage of. Many teachers provide support and guidance outside of lessons which some students voluntarily attend to improve their learning.
- Students are well prepared for their learning as routines to check uniform and apparatus are followed in form time each morning.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because a very small number of students do not work hard enough and, therefore, do not make the progress they could.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and have confidence that the school will deal effectively with any issues which might arise. The school monitors all behaviour and conflict issues closely and its systems for ensuring that all students feel safe and can contribute positively to the school community are impressive.
- Students that follow the alternative curriculum and attend off-site provision have full confidence in the arrangements for their safety. They have been given the necessary training and guidance to use equipment in a workplace environment and understand their responsibilities to themselves and others when using this equipment.
- Attendance in 2013 and 2014 was slightly below the national average. The school has demonstrated that it has effective procedures to ensure that attendance, which is rising, should continue to increase. The school has worked closely with a group of persistent absentees whose attendance is improving.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching has improved rapidly since the last inspection and, as a result, students are making good progress across most subjects and across different ages. Notably, because of the improved teaching in English and mathematics, the proportion of students making good progress in these subjects has risen strongly.
- Students' rapid progress is evident from the work seen in books and in assessment material provided. Achievement in science, particularly at Key Stage 4, is accelerating rapidly because of a strong focus on assessment and intervention. The use of online assessment material with easy access from a mobile device has encouraged more students to engage with the process of testing and retesting, and is leading to higher levels of achievement.

- Assessment in English and a focus on the small steps necessary to secure a wider and deeper understanding across all years has led to some impressive and rapid progress in all groups of students. In this subject, teaching is of a consistently high quality across the whole department. Students say they enjoy the lessons and feel well supported by their teachers and as a consequence standards are rising rapidly.
- Standards are rising because teachers have set high expectations and students have risen to the challenge. This was clearly evident in a history lesson where the class were writing an extended answer to a question about the importance of cattle in the 'Wild West'. The teacher's high expectations were being met because the students were constantly being challenged through verbal and written feedback.
- Further evidence of high expectations was seen in a Year 11 drama lesson where the students were working on a theme in the style of 'Berkovian aesthetics'. The students were actively contributing to the lesson at a standard, and with a maturity, usually associated with GCE A level.
- Most students demonstrate good attitudes to learning and are well focused and engaged fully in lessons. Some students have been taught to use a variety of methods of assessment such as self-assessment and peer-assessment. These students felt this helped them understand better where they had lost marks or had misconceptions and, therefore, contributed to a deeper understanding of the work.
- The quality of teaching in physical education, science, English, geography, history, religious education, modern foreign languages, psychology and drama is consistently good or better. There were some examples of outstanding progress being made in other lessons such as mathematics.
- The quality of teaching in the vocational subjects is good. A combination of good provision and effective planning enables students to make good progress. A literacy lesson was observed where the teacher used source material such as ration books and government propaganda from the wartime period to promote empathy. The outcome was some effective extended writing from a small group that found the work challenging and stimulating.
- Students are encouraged to read widely and often. The school library is a welcoming, lively environment with a focus on modern authors and new books, which are prominently displayed. The school's most-able students are encouraged to participate in the Essex book awards which involve them reading a number of books and keeping a regular blog of their progress. Year 7 students are given extensive support with reading through a formal reading scheme, the morning tutor programme and reading groups.
- The English department promotes reading through regular library lessons, reading journals and a creative writing club.
- The recently appointed literacy coordinator has had some impact on the promotion of whole-school literacy through the delivery of whole-school work training, reading initiatives and a cross-curricular handbook. There was evidence of literacy being used in subjects other than English, but this practice has yet to be fully adopted in all areas of the school.
- The quality of teaching in design and technology, and textiles in particular, does not always provide enough challenge for all students. In some lessons, the lack of regular checking of progress means that the teacher does not always know where misconceptions are developing and, therefore, where to provide intervention so that the students can make further progress.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- After a period of decline at the time of the last inspection, standards across the school are rising and in some subjects rising rapidly. The GCSE examination results in 2014 showed an increase in the proportion of students gaining five A\* to C grade passes including English and mathematics. The proportion of students making expected progress in English has risen sharply since 2013. The proportion of students that make better-than-expected progress in English and mathematics is also rising strongly.

- The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium funding achieving expected progress has historically been low, with these students attaining one and two thirds of a grade behind their peers in school, and nationally, in mathematics and English. This gap is closing rapidly in these subjects. In Key Stage 4, the gap in attainment has narrowed significantly in Year 10. Indications from school information show that the current Year 11 are predicted to close the gap to two thirds of a grade in both mathematics and English in 2015. In Key Stage 3, the gap is also closing rapidly in most subjects.
- Students for whom English is an additional language are making good progress in all years.
- Students that are following the alternative curriculum are making good progress. The school has ensured that most of these students will still be entered for a core GCSE curriculum as well as attaining a vocational qualification. The school has carefully chosen providers that offer the range and quality of courses that best suit their students and the school works closely with the provider to monitor students' attendance, achievement and well-being.
- The most-able students are making outstanding progress. The school uses information effectively to ensure these students are identified and challenged in lessons and as a result, the proportion of these students exceeding expected progress in 2014 was 66% in English and 76% in mathematics.
- The school is using early entry to GCSE examinations in science effectively to raise standards in additional and further science.
- Achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs was of significant concern in 2013 with most groups not making expected progress in mathematics and only some in English. In 2014 there were significant gains for those supported at school action and those with a statement of educational needs. A change of focus by the special educational needs coordinator has had a positive impact on the quality of provision and the training of staff within this area and gaps are closing rapidly.

### The sixth form provision

is good

- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Standards are rising year on year at both GCE A level and AS level. School information on progress, which has become more accurate over time, indicates that this trend will continue into 2015. The school uses assessment data well to check on students' performance and to provide interventions where necessary.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. The sixth form leader works closely with the school's senior leaders with a clear focus on progress and the impact of teaching on achievement. The schools' high expectations for its students have been communicated effectively to all sixth form teaching staff and they are aspirational for their students. A high proportion of students are applying for places in higher education including the top universities. The quality of teaching is good and improving as both teachers and students use the same assessment information to check on performance. All students monitor their own progress routinely and with the support and guidance of their teachers identify areas of weakness in their knowledge and understanding. This was particularly effective in all the science subjects.
- The achievement of students on vocational courses is particularly strong. This was confirmed by observations of the quality of teaching and a scrutiny of students' work.
- The quality of marking and feedback is good and enables students to make corrections to their work which deepen their understanding and knowledge. This was noted particularly in psychology, where the advice given in written feedback is of high quality and enables students to revisit work and plug any gaps in their understanding.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Students respond positively to the mature learning environment that has been promoted and contribute to the wider school community through their work with main school form groups, charity activities and mentoring. The school has links with civil liberties groups which help to promote a climate of tolerance and respect.

- The support and guidance provided by the school enable the students to make appropriate choices about their future. Students feel well supported by a rigorous diet of aspiration, expectation and support from their form tutors and teachers. Specialised advice on careers, work placements, apprenticeships and university applications is available as well as contact with ex-students at different educational establishments.
  
- A few sixth form students do not use the opportunities for private study and waste their time when they are not in lessons.



## What inspection judgements mean

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

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137877
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	449069

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1145
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Leanne Hedden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carole Herman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01277 219131
<b>Fax number</b>	01277 226422
<b>Email address</b>	shs@shenfield.essex.sch.uk

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