

Shene School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102927
Local Authority	Richmond Upon Thames
Inspection number	323716
Inspection dates	12-13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Gale (HMI)

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

Type of School	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	703
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tina Jones
Headteacher	Ms Lesley Kirby
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2007
School address	Park Avenue East Sheen London SW14 8RG
Telephone number	020 8876 8891
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size school. The number of students transferring to and from the school other than at the planned time of admission in September is higher than the national average. There are more boys than girls. Most of the students travel some distance to the school. Many come from other London boroughs. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than most schools. The school has more than double the national average percentage of students who speak English as an additional language. Shene has achieved Artsmark gold, the Beatbullying award and the Jack Petchey award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Shene School now provides a satisfactory education for its students. Following a turbulent period of changes in leadership and student underachievement, a resilient headteacher has galvanised her leadership team and staff. Establishing an accurate picture of the school's performance has been crucial in allowing significant progress on the many challenges the school faced at the time of the last inspection. There is a clear drive from staff at all levels to address the remaining pockets of underperformance and a shared sense of a school moving forward. As one parent, supported by many students, commented, 'There has been a dramatic improvement.' Some aspects of the school's work are now good, including a curriculum that was previously inadequate in respect of meeting students' needs.

Standards in the 2008 GCSE examinations were below average, but were a significant improvement on the previous year. Students' achievement, bearing in mind their average starting points, was inadequate for this year group, partly because of a legacy of underachievement. However, students currently at the school are making satisfactory progress due to better teaching, an enhanced curriculum and improving target setting, academic guidance and attendance. Teaching is currently satisfactory. In some curriculum areas teaching is consistently effective, and students make good progress due to effective challenge and active learning matched to their individual needs. However, this is not consistently the case. Across, and within, some departments lessons are overly teacher led and the pace of learning can drop. Teachers generally maintain a calm and supportive atmosphere in classes, which helps students focus on their work without interruption. However, where the pace of learning is low, unfocused and disruptive behaviour can occur. Senior leaders, supported by consultants, have an accurate view of the strengths of teaching and learning and work to improve this important aspect has led to an increasing number of good or better lessons.

Students have a good understanding of modern life in an ethnically diverse society. They are taught to respect differing backgrounds and religious viewpoints and because of this, Shene has good community cohesion and a harmonious atmosphere. Attendance is satisfactory, but improving at a good rate due to the hard work of the school and its partners. The school endeavours to teach students to pursue healthy lifestyles. Healthy eating is promoted and efforts are made to engage students to participate in physical exercise, although these aims are not universally accepted. Students adopt safe practices well. They are given many opportunities to develop responsibility and the school works extensively, and successfully, with many community partners. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well. Most students have an enthusiasm and pride in their school and the way that it is improving, and enjoy their education.

A good curriculum, put in place over the last year, has facilitated better student progress, attendance and inclusion. Students appreciate a new thematic approach in Year 7 and wider vocational opportunities in Key Stage 4. Students say they are well looked after and feel supported in making choices about the courses they study and life beyond the school. New academic guidance systems, including tutor review days, are in place and starting to embed. Students generally know their targets, but the guidance they get towards achieving these is inconsistent across the school. For example, the quality and frequency of marking is variable.

The school is working hard to be at the heart of its community. The leadership team works well with a number of education partners who are supporting their work. The headteacher and senior leadership have developed strongly in the last year and feel that they are now in a position to be make better informed judgements about what support the school needs to continue moving forward. The large number of initiatives introduced has improved students' standards and progress, attendance and pride in the school. However, there is still much to be done to raise student achievement to expected levels. The quality of middle leadership is still variable but developing through coaching models. Leaders at all levels recognise the need for careful analysis of the number of strategies employed and their impact on school improvement. Staff morale is good, because their collective efforts to improve the school have had a clear impact. Progress made, in a short time, demonstrates a good capacity to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching to accelerate student progress and raise standards.
- Refine and embed academic guidance systems and support them with marking that is more consistent in helping students work towards their targets.
- Analyse and prioritise the key strategies to take the school forward and plan carefully to implement and embed them.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students enter Shene with standards that are close to the national average. Progress in Key Stage 4 was inadequate for the students who took their GCSE examinations in 2007. School data demonstrates that this has remained the case for those completing Year 11 in 2008, although there has been a significant rise in standards. Standards remain below the national average, but the number of students achieving 5 A* to C grades including English and mathematics rose by 12%. More effective tracking and intervention, put in place following the 2007 results, demonstrates that standards will rise again in 2009 compared with the performance of students in previous years. A strong focus on improving learning in lessons has begun to address a legacy of underachievement. Students currently attending Shene are making satisfactory progress. Improved teaching and learning are also leading to rising standards in Key Stage 3. Predictions for students currently in Year 9 show that students are making good progress in mathematics and English, with slower, though satisfactory, progress reported in science.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, when taken as a whole, make satisfactory progress during their time in the school. Individual circumstance, particularly rates of attendance, is more relevant to progress than specific learning difficulty. Those with specialist support, including a statement of educational need, make faster progress due to the quality of the help they receive. Increasingly effective support for students with English as an additional language means that they make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older students eagerly contributed to a philosophy masterclass observed during the inspection, reflecting the students' positive attitudes to school and their work. They enjoy lessons, especially when they are actively involved and report that they feel safe in school. Behaviour in lessons and around the site leads to relationships which are generally harmonious. Poor behaviour by a few students interrupts a minority of lessons. Older students make a positive contribution to the well-being of younger students by acting as mentors for them. Students enthusiastically support fund-raising for charity, including going on a 13km walk in Richmond Park. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and this has seen it rise to close to the national average, with students being well informed about their personal contribution. Many students travel some distance to school and punctuality can be a problem. The school sends home a very comprehensive leaflet to help parents and carers ensure their son or daughter arrives at school on time. Students understand the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle, but do not always choose to do so. The school raises the awareness of the world of work through work placements and events and preparation for economic well-being is satisfactory and improving as standards rise. The local police regularly work in school, listen to students' worries or concerns and support the work of the school well. Students value this partnership and fondly refer to the police as our 'private police'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise, and provide good role models for their students. They plan lessons to include clear objectives so that students understand what they are meant to be learning, and establish a good rapport with their students. Some teachers are very successful in engaging students by providing them with a good range of activities that enable them to put theory into practice and gain a clear understanding of what to do in order to improve. They give students good opportunities to learn from each other as well as the teacher. For example, in a physical education lesson Year 10, students showed they understood the process of muscle development, then practised and performed a series of basketball skills. They assessed their own and each others' performance by watching this performance as it was recorded on video, and showed that they understood what they had to do to reach the next level. In some lessons teachers do not provide activities that are sufficiently stimulating and challenging, and some teachers do not reinforce the school's expectations with regard to behaviour and punctuality strongly enough. This results in some students becoming disengaged and disrupting others' learning. Some lessons are too teacher-led, and do not include activities that are sufficiently well tailored to match the interests and abilities of all the students.

Teaching and learning have been a strong focus for the school and through activities such as teachers working in cross-department trios, best practice is being shared. This is resulting in an increasing proportion of good or better lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum now provides a good match to students' needs, interests and abilities. It has been developed significantly to provide them with clear pathways that will enable them to gain qualifications and skills for future life. It includes a good variety of subjects and courses appropriate for students with different levels of ability, including a good range of vocational courses, some of which the school provides in close and effective collaboration with local colleges. Higher-attaining students can study up to 13 GCSEs. Year 7 students are able to make a smooth transition from primary school because they are given their own dedicated area within the school, and benefit from an innovative programme that emphasises the links between the subjects they are studying. This enables them to develop good skills, for example, in enquiry and problem-solving, that will help them make good academic and personal progress. The school does not fully comply with government recommendations regarding the amount of time it allocates to physical education. However, many students enjoy taking part in the good range of sporting and other physical activities the school provides, including rugby league, dance and girls' football. The school also provides students with good opportunities for cultural, artistic and subject-related enrichment such as choirs, plays, trips, visits and masterclasses in science, philosophy, Arabic and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a caring and supportive environment. The pastoral care systems for supporting students reflect their individual needs. Through its daily work, vision statement and ethos, the school actively promotes equality. There are good transition arrangements for new Year 7 students, which means they settle quickly and happily into school. One Year 7 student said, 'This is the best school ever!' The school works effectively with professionals, a variety of outside agencies and other London boroughs from which many of the students come, to support the welfare of all students. Policies and procedures for safeguarding students and child protection procedures are robust. Older students say they feel confident about their next stage in education and that the school has helped them to make appropriate choices. Systems recently introduced to monitor students' academic performance are beginning to have an impact. Students generally know their individual targets. However, the quality of written feedback on how to improve is too variable.

Some receive clear feedback on the level they have reached, with further guidance that is effective in telling them how to make progress. Other feedback fails to focus on students' strengths and areas for development. The school works well with parents and carers in an effort to ensure students continue in their education and older students are clear about how their academic progress relates to the options open to them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

A dedicated and enthusiastic headteacher has successfully developed a senior leadership team with evident commitment to the success of students at Shene. This has led to improvements in teaching and learning, attendance and attainment. With the number of significant challenges facing the school, the leadership recognises there is still much to be achieved. The senior team have set a clear agenda for improvement and their drive is shared among leaders at all levels. However, there is not yet a consistent analysis of the most effective ways to accelerate the learning of students. Leaders know their school well, including its strengths and weaknesses. Planning to address the weaknesses that exist is strong in some subject areas but not consistently sharp. The headteacher is working effectively to develop the capacity of her wider leadership and there are clearly emerging strengths, though inconsistencies still exist in the strength of curricular leadership. Target-setting is beginning to raise standards but these remain below expected levels. Governance, through training and improved partnership with the school's leaders is now good. Effective support and increasing challenge are helping to sharpen the work of the school leadership. A drive to recruit a governing body more reflective of the school community is bearing fruit. The school is effectively promoting community cohesion through its work with primary schools, local residents and the significant wider community it serves. This school values its diversity and through teacher interpreters at parents' evenings, for example, works well to ensure equality of opportunity.

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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
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B



Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

26 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Shene School, London, SW14 8RG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and meeting with you, and were impressed by the pride you take in your school.

These are the main findings of our inspection.

- Shene School provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.
- Standards are improving and you are currently making satisfactory progress.
- We agree with the headteacher and senior team that most lessons are satisfactory, with an increasing proportion being good.
- The school has improved your curriculum and it is now good.
- The headteacher and the senior team have set out a clear direction for the school and their vision is shared across the school community.
- There are good opportunities for you to make a positive contribution to the community and you feel safe.
- The school is effective at promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination and your school is a harmonious community.

The inspection team and the headteacher agree that you should achieve even higher standards and we have asked that:

- teachers deliver more lessons that are good or better, so that you make even greater progress
- marking is more consistent in helping you work towards your targets
- school leaders work out and apply the most effective strategies to improve your school at the fastest rate possible.

You can do your part to help by ensuring that you always get to school on time, behave responsibly and work hard when you are there. The team joins me in sending you best wishes for your studies and hope that you all do very well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector