

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Shenstone Lodge School

Birmingham Road, Shenstone, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS14 0LB

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 November 2024

The headteacher of this school is Neil Toplass. This school is part of Manor Hall Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Philip Harrison, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Edward Fitchett.

Outcome

Shenstone Lodge School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Shenstone Lodge has a simple message, which is that pupils will be 'safe, happy, independent and learning'. Pupils are warmly welcomed each morning by staff who go above and beyond to put pupils at ease. Relationships are a real strength and underpin much of what is successful. There is tangible respect and tolerance shown by pupils and staff alike. A kind word goes a long way here and ensures pupils feel safe and valued.

Before joining this school, pupils have found education challenging because of their social, emotional and mental health needs. Many have also been excluded from other settings. This difficult start to education is well understood by staff, who work hard to overcome the barriers pupils have to their learning and well-being.

The way in which the school helps pupils to behave leads to lessons being calm. Disruption is rare in class because staff are skilled in the way they manage pupils' behaviour and emotional well-being. This helps make pupils ready to learn, and they are keen to do so. Many pupils enter the school with significant gaps in their knowledge. However, they work hard and achieve well because of the high expectations that the school sets.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There is a ceaseless ambition to get provision right for every pupil. When they start, a detailed induction process is undertaken. This helps staff understand pupils' educational and emotional needs and enables positive, caring relationships. Pupils, parents and carers know and appreciate that this is a school where staff put pupils' interests first.

The school aims for pupils to secure mathematics and English skills quickly. Teachers sensitively adapt lessons to take account of pupils' needs. Mathematics lessons help pupils improve their mathematical skills and knowledge. The feedback teachers provide helps address any misconceptions quickly. Most pupils start school finding reading a struggle. Teachers carefully check what sounds pupils know. This ensures that staff teach lessons that help pupils learn systematically from their starting points. Staff have been trained to teach the phonics programme, although there is some slight variability in how they implement it.

The curriculum is broad and engaging. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) offer is well considered and responsive to the changing needs of pupil cohorts. It addresses pupils' wider development effectively. It helps them understand their world and how to be an active part of it. However, the school has not checked the quality of the implementation of the PSHE curriculum as thoroughly as it could. This means there is variability in the quality of implementation and pupils are not becoming as knowledgeable as they could be.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of suspensions since the last inspection. A greater focus on understanding the reasons for pupils' behaviour, along with the use of restorative conversations, has led to this. The school recognises that the number of restrictive physical interventions, particularly at the primary site, is still higher than they would like. Behaviour at the secondary site is positive. This is the result of pupils having typically been in the school for longer and taking advantage of how well the school supports them. The school also works hard to secure high attendance and makes careful, timely checks if pupils are absent.

The work of the school beyond the subject curriculum is impressive. There is a relentless drive to offer pupils an array of purposeful cultural, creative and sporting opportunities. Pupils benefit from outdoor learning that takes place on the extensive grounds at both sites. Trips, including to theatres and places of worship, enhance the curriculum, and residential trips help develop pupils' independence and resilience. Work-based learning, including at alternative provisions, has a high priority and is helping prepare pupils for later life. Whether it is construction, barbering or training to be baristas, pupils relish this time. They experience what it is like to complete job and college applications and take part in workplace interviews.

The school is successful in engaging with parents. They recognise the importance of this partnership and enhance this through regular communications and calls home.

Staff are proud to work at this well-led and managed school. They support one another and appreciate the support that leaders at all levels provide. This is a happy and positive place for staff and pupils alike.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of early reading lacks some precision and consistency. This means that pupils at an early stage of learning to read do not gain phonics knowledge as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that those who teach phonics are supported to do so with precision and in a way that allows them to continually check pupils' understanding.
- The school has not quality assured the implementation of a small number of subjects as well as it has for English and mathematics. This means there is variability in how well these subjects are implemented. The school should ensure that strong quality assurance processes are used to ensure that the implementation of the curriculum is universally effective and pupils' learning is maximised.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Shenstone Lodge School, to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147347
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10344161
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Edward Fitchett
CEO of the trust	Philip Harrison
Headteacher	Neil Toplass
Website	www.shenstonelodge.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 October 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have education, health and care plans and are placed at the school by local authorities.
- The school joined Manor Hall Academy Trust in June 2020. The trust runs 16 schools.
- The school occupies two sites that are approximately 16 miles apart. Primary-age pupils attend the Shenstone Lodge, Birmingham Road, Shenstone, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS14 0LB. Secondary-age pupils are based at Brades Lodge, Lower City Road, Tividale, Oldbury B69 2HF.
- The school received a no formal designation inspection in October 2021. This was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the heads of school and other leaders.
- Inspectors visited lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees, the CEO, a school improvement partner and members of the local advisory board.
- The lead inspector spoke to a member of staff at one alternative provision.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. They also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including school improvement plans.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Winzor

Ofsted Inspector

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