School report

Inspection of Upper Shirley High School

Bellemoor Road, Upper Shirley, Southampton, Hampshire SO15 7QU

Inspection dates: 22–23 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders expect the very best from pupils. Pupils enjoy their lessons and appreciate teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects. Pupils say teachers are always willing to help them improve their work.

There is a calm and productive atmosphere in lessons and around the school. Pupils can explain what the school motto, 'believe, respect, succeed', means for them. They show a pride in their appearance. Both staff and pupils are proud of the inclusive nature of the school. Pupils show respect for each other and for adults in the school.

Pupils behave well. Their learning is rarely affected by pupil misbehaviour. Leaders have recently introduced systems to improve behaviour further. Pupils feel safe in the school and very well cared for. They make good use of the expert advice and support available in the guidance centre. Pupils say that bullying occurs rarely. When it does, they are confident that staff will sort out their problems.

The headteacher leads the school with passion and determination. He is ably supported by his senior team. The school's good reputation and increasing popularity is well deserved. Pupils' transition from primary school is very smooth.

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

Leaders have high ambitions for what pupils can achieve. Inspirational subject leaders expect pupils to be challenged. In most subjects, pupils progress well. Teachers show strong subject expertise and benefit from useful staff training. Teachers work together to plan interesting lessons that help pupils build on what they already know. Teaching across the curriculum is generally strong, although it is more variable in some subjects than others. English and food and nutrition are consistently well planned and delivered, and pupils achieve well. There are also strengths in geography, art and design and languages. Pupils' learning is improving in science and mathematics, but there is more to do.

Staff help pupils to prepare well for examinations. GCSE results are higher than national levels. Pupils are keen to learn. Sometimes, they do not relate what they learn to their life beyond the examinations. For example, in geography lessons, pupils were enjoying studying about two different cities' responses to environmental problems, but they knew little about the global concerns about climate change. Leaders are helping pupils understand the world around them better by studying a wide range of books in different subjects. Pupils are expected to read every day.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects at key stages 3 and 4. However, leaders have been unable to recruit a specialist, high-quality teacher of design and technology. For now, this subject has been amalgamated with art and design. Leaders ensure

that teachers receive training and pupils learn as much as possible about design and technology, but a few technical topics are missing.

At key stage 4, leaders have high ambitions for pupils' academic success. A higher proportion of pupils than in the past are taking subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by the special educational needs coordinator and her effective team in the specialist centre. Many teachers plan so that pupils with SEND learn well. However, sometimes teachers are not adapting their teaching to meet pupils' specific learning needs well enough.

Leaders aim to prepare pupils to become thoughtful members of the changing local community. Pupils who study citizenship for GCSE have a better understanding of life in modern Britain than others who do not. However, pupils are clear that everyone should be treated equally. There are a range of clubs and other opportunities on offer. About half of pupils regularly participate, mainly in highly successful sporting activities.

Leaders, including governors, are committed to helping every pupil do their best. They are determined to keep a strong sense of community as the school grows. Staff are very positive about improvements at the school but sometimes feel rather overwhelmed by the pace of change.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture where the well-being and safety of pupils is given the highest importance. Pupils are confident that there are trusted adults they can speak to if they are worried about something. Well trained staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Members of the safeguarding team use their expertise and knowledge about individual pupils very well when assessing levels of risk and deciding on appropriate next steps. Leaders provide support in school and work relentlessly to help pupils and families get the support they need from other agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have worked with teachers to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Sometimes, across and within subjects, the curriculum is less effectively implemented. Assessment is not used consistently well by teachers to adjust their planning. Leaders can draw on the strong practice that exists within the school to make further improvements to teaching.

- Not all teaching meets the learning needs of pupils who have SEND well enough. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive the necessary training to strengthen their support for these pupils.
- Leaders should continue their efforts to recruit a high-quality specialist teacher of design and technology so that pupils experience their full entitlement to the subject during key stage 3.
- Leaders have successfully implemented an academic curriculum at key stage 4 which leads to high outcomes. Governors should continue to challenge leaders to ensure that a broad curriculum is offered and cultural capital is developed. The curriculum could do more to promote pupils' wider cultural knowledge and understanding, especially in aesthetic and technical fields.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137037
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10114913
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	882
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Ellis
Headteacher	Stuart Woods
Website	http://uppershirleyhigh.org/
Date of previous inspection	10 February 2016

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has increased its admission number into Year 7 and pupil numbers have increased.
- A small number of pupils carry out part of their learning at The Compass School and The Military Mentors Training Academy.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The previous inspection in February 2016 confirmed that the school continued to be good.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy and assistant headteachers and other leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of English, mathematics, science, geography, languages, and art and design (incorporating design and technology). Inspectors discussed curriculum design

with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the curriculum.

- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed. Inspectors met with safeguarding team.
- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the local governing body, and spoke with the chair of the trust on the telephone.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the Hamwic Education Trust.
- Inspectors considered the views of 64 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 59 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. Inspectors took account of the 165 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Theresa Phillips, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sue Bullen	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Carlyle	Ofsted Inspector
Ciaran O'Dowda	Ofsted Inspector

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