

Southborough High School

Hook Road, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 5AS

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's ambition for excellence permeates the whole school. He has led improvements in teaching so that it is consistently good and sometimes of high quality.
- As a result students' achievement is good and improving rapidly. This year the proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, rose by 12%.
- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve.
- The sixth form is good and rapidly improving leading to high levels of attainment for many students. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good.
- The school provides students with a challenging curriculum with a large number following at least five English Baccalaureate subjects. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Students are provided with many opportunities for cultural and sporting activities.
- Students are proud of their school, wear their uniform well and are polite and courteous. They arrive to lessons keen to learn and their relationships with each other and with their teachers help to ensure that they make good progress in class.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers provide students with helpful feedback on their work to help them to improve. When it is given, students sometimes have insufficient opportunity to act upon their teacher's advice.
- Teachers do not always use the data that they have on students' achievement to plan their lessons. As a result, some groups of students do not learn as quickly as they could.
- Not all subject leaders are sufficiently focused on improving the quality of teaching in their teams.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 33 lessons, a number of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. They took in samples of the students' work and looked closely at the quality of teachers' marking and the extent to which this is helping students to improve.
- Inspectors met with four groups of students to discuss their experience of school, and particularly their learning, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors met with four members of the governing body and a number of school leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents including: minutes of the meetings of the governing body; safety procedures; behaviour and attendance records; documents relating to school self-review and improvement; and the school's records on performance management and teaching and learning.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 102 responses to the Parent View survey and 49 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Graham Tuck, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Smith	Additional Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Bray	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized secondary school with 125 in the sixth form.
- Southborough High School converted to become an academy on 1 March 2012. When its predecessor school, also Southborough High School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- Approximately one in four of the school's population is eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for children in local authority care, children of service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is in line with the national average. There are no children from service families currently on the school's roll.
- There are 23 students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium, which is provided by the government to support those students who have not previously reached the expected levels in English and mathematics.
- Approximately 60% of students are from a minority ethnic group which is above the national average.
- Approximately 40% of students speak English as an additional language which is above the national average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action is in line with the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- Approximately 30% of students join the school some time after the start of Year 7.
- Six Year 11 students attend a course for one day a week at Anstee Bridge. This is so that they can develop important skills that will be valuable to them in their future education, training and employment.
- Almost all students sit their GCSE mathematics examination at the end of Year 10 with the opportunity to re-sit the examination in the summer term of Year 11.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and thereby further improve students' progress and achievement by ensuring that all teachers:
 - consistently use the data that they have on students' achievement to plan their lessons so that students of different abilities are supported and challenged
 - regularly mark students' work, providing students with advice on what they need to do to improve and give them opportunities to act upon this advice.
- Focus the work of all subject leaders on ensuring that there is high quality teaching in the areas for which they are responsible.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the school with levels of attainment that are a little below the national average. Students including those who join the school through the year make good progress in most of their subjects from their starting points since the school opened and as a result, the proportion attaining five or more A* to C passes including English and mathematics has risen rapidly this year and is above the national average. Weaknesses in the administration of English, which had led to lower than expected outcomes in 2012, have been successfully tackled.
- As a consequence of the effective use of additional funding, for example the provision of an extra teaching group in mathematics, Year 11 students supported by the pupil premium made good progress in their GCSE examinations in 2013. As a result, the gap between their attainment and that for all other students has narrowed to half a grade in English and a grade in mathematics. Across the school, including in the sixth form, the progress made by students supported by the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is monitored carefully and this leads to good levels of achievement.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are monitored carefully by the school and receive good levels of support in class. As a result, they are fully engaged in their learning and progress at least as well as other students.
- Students who attend another setting in order to develop important skills to support them with their future education, training or employment achieve well and make good progress. Of the three students who attended last year, all are now in full-time education or employment.
- Almost all students take their GCSE mathematics examination at the end of Year 10 with the opportunity to re-sit the examination in the summer of Year 11. The school uses this system to motivate the students and puts considerable emphasis on ensuring that the most able deepen their understanding of mathematics and are fully prepared for advanced level studies. This year, almost a quarter of the grades awarded at GCSE were at A* or A and in the sixth form, mathematics was one of the highest performing subjects.
- The school does much to develop a love of reading and to encourage its students to read widely and often. For example, in the library a member of staff reads to the students once a week from a favourite novel and competitions are organised to promote students' creative writing.
- Students from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make progress that is at least as good as that of all other students in the school.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and improving rapidly with over half the grades awarded this year at A level at either A*, A or B.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Students make good progress over time throughout the school, including in English and mathematics, because teachers have very high expectations of their work and behaviour. Students appreciate the positive relationships that they enjoy with their teachers and recognise that this is an important ingredient in the progress that they make.
- Of the parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey, over 90% agreed that their child was well taught in the school and made good progress.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject that they teach and this encourages the students to engage with their learning. For example, in an outstanding art lesson the students were inspired by the teacher's demonstration of clay modelling and were able to produce work of the highest quality. Through the teacher's skilful questioning, the students were helped to analyse their own and each other's work and identify how it could be improved.
- Where teachers plan carefully for the progress of all students, the learning is always good and

often it is outstanding. In a Year 7 French lesson, the teacher provided a range of activities which meant that students of different abilities could move on at pace. All were excited by the language, and keen to acquire new techniques and to try them out. However, in some lessons, planning is less effective because teachers do not make good use of the assessment information that they have on their students. As a result, students are not supported or challenged enough and their progress in these lessons is more limited.

- Most teachers give students detailed written comments on their work so that they understand what they need to do to improve. Where this is most effective, teachers provide their students with opportunities to act upon this advice. However, in a few cases, teachers' comments are too general or infrequent to be helpful or students are provided with insufficient opportunities to reflect on feedback and to act upon the teachers' advice.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students show a pride in their school through their smart appearance and the way that they behave moving to and from their lessons. They are respectful and courteous toward visitors: for example, opening doors for adults during change of lessons or at breaks and lunchtimes. These positive attitudes are reflected in the school's declining rates of exclusion and improving attendance figures.
- The few students who attend alternative settings for one day a week are provided with strategies for improving their behaviour and dealing with the challenges that will face them in their future education, training or employment. They respond well to this and appreciate the additional support they are given by the school.
- Students are punctual, keen and ready to learn. They work well in small groups and discuss ideas sensibly, listening with respect to the views of others. On the very few occasions when students' behaviour in lessons requires improvement it is because teaching fails to engage them.
- Students' behaviour in the sixth form is good and often outstanding. Students take an active role in organising school charity events, chairing the school council and supporting younger students. Students feel very safe in school and have a clear understanding of risks that they might encounter such as cyber-bullying. There are very few incidents of bullying but, if they do occur, students are confident that they will be dealt with effectively by the teachers.
- A very large majority of the parents in both the school's own and the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire agree that their child enjoys coming to school and feels safe.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision for the school that he has successfully shared with staff, students and parents. Central to his leadership has been a focus on improving the quality of teaching so that all students can make excellent progress. In this he is well supported by his leadership team and many middle leaders.
- At senior leadership level, effective systems are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and identifying the training needs of staff and there are clear links between the management of teachers' performance, their appraisal and their pay. However, not all subject leaders are sufficiently vigilant in checking the quality of teaching, in particular the quality of marking and extent to which teachers use the data they have on students' achievement to plan their lessons.
- The curriculum provides its students with the opportunity to follow a wide range of academic subjects as well as a few well-chosen vocational options and this is well matched to students' interests, abilities and aspirations. This year, over a third of students achieved the English Baccalaureate qualification. Sixth form students appreciate the increased choice of subjects they have been offered and the extent to which these prepare them for university courses.
- The school is particularly effective in promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. There are partnerships with schools in Bangladesh, Spain and Senegal, links with local churches, mosques and synagogues and a prayer room for staff and students. Almost all the parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed: responses to the staff questionnaire were also extremely positive indicating that staff morale is very high.

- Leaders at all levels ensure that equality of opportunity is well promoted and that discrimination in any form is not tolerated. For example, the performance of different groups of students is closely monitored, including those supported through the pupil premium.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students, including those who attend other settings, meet statutory requirements.
- The school has received good support from the local authority improvement adviser, especially in reviewing the quality of teaching. This has helped the school to develop an accurate view of its strengths and priorities for further development and these are set out in a high quality improvement plan.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Members of the governing body are passionate about their school and demonstrate a strong commitment to its future success. They bring a range of expertise to their roles and have recently undertaken an audit of their skills so that they can identify their future training needs. For example, they have recognised that it will be important to develop a clearer understanding of school achievement data so that they can continue to provide robust challenge at meetings. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have been prepared to challenge areas of underperformance: for example, when students did not achieve as well as expected in English in 2012. Through their scrutiny of such documents as Ofsted's data dashboard and reports from school leaders they have an understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and are able to compare the school's performance to that of similar schools and schools nationally. Governors have an oversight of the school's performance management processes and ensure that pay progression is linked to good teaching. Governors have the expertise needed to oversee the school's finances and to ensure that resources, including pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, are managed properly.

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

Unique reference number	137917
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	425652

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	700
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Upton
Headteacher	Niall Smith
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 83914324
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