

Southend High School for Boys

Prittlewell Chase, Southend-on-Sea, SS0 0RG

Inspection dates 9–10 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher and other leaders have a clear vision for students who, as a result, excel academically, but also contribute extremely well to society.
- Leaders at all levels have driven up students' progress so that all groups of students gain very high examination results across a wide range of subjects at both GCSE and GCE A level.
- An ethos of excellence in both academic achievement and a wide range of activities permeates all aspects of the school. High quality music wafted into the inspection base room as students practised the pipe organ and piano. The school contributes very successfully to art exhibitions, business competitions and international sporting challenges.
- The curriculum is very broad and prepares students exceptionally well and in a variety of ways, for their adult lives.
- Highly effective teaching across the school is consistently at least good and often outstanding. This is monitored rigorously by school leaders and governors.
- Students' behaviour both around the school and during lessons is excellent. Their mature attitude and contribution to lessons plays a very positive role in their achievement.
- Students throughout the school, including the sixth form, are thirsty for new knowledge and new experiences.
- The school's work to keep the students safe is outstanding. It is monitored regularly and rigorously.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Most students attain very high grades across a range of subjects and most students gain places at leading universities.
- Parents, staff and students are all extremely positive about all aspects of the school.
- The highly positive impact of governance is to be found in the school's academic and other successes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed students' learning in 43 lessons, of which 11 were in the sixth form.
- Six observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. A tour of classes was made with the headteacher, examining the quality of teaching and the behaviour of students in lessons. Two further tours of the school took place which were unaccompanied. Observations of students' behaviour in the dining hall at lunchtime were made, as were some out of lesson activities including the geography club, the law society and wind band rehearsal.
- The inspection team looked carefully at the quality of work in students' books in order to assess progress and teaching over time.
- The inspection team took into account 221 responses to the online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and 51 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team met with the Chair of the Governing Body, two other governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, a group of middle leaders, leaders with specific areas of responsibility, the librarian, a group of teachers and different groups of students, including those in the sixth form.
- The inspection team analysed and scrutinised the school's self-evaluation documentation, which included evidence from governors' minutes, school policies and progress information.
- Inspectors examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of students in the school.

Inspection team

Adrian Lyons, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Jones

Additional Inspector

Andrew (Jack) Jackson

Additional Inspector

Suzanne Bzikot

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly larger than average-sized secondary school.
- Admission to the school is selective.
- There are very few students who are supported by pupil premium funding. At a little over one in twenty students, this is a much smaller proportion than that found in other schools in the town. Pupil premium is extra funding provided by the government for some groups of students including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority. Students supported by pupil premium funding are referred to in Ofsted reports as 'disadvantaged'.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is low. It represents fewer than one in twenty students.
- The majority of students are White British and speak English as their first language. There are small proportions of students from a range of other ethnic groups.
- Ten sixth form students study computing at St. Thomas More High School.
- The school meets the government floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Encourage all teachers to match the school's many excellent examples of providing challenge for the most able students, to enable them to achieve their best in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school has consistently delivered very high standards of attainment. Under the current headteacher and senior leadership, there has been a drive to improve the quality of teaching further. As a result achievement that was already strong has increased further, especially in English. Leaders are continually striving to improve the school and their recent track record gives confidence in their capacity to continue this.
- The school's view of its own performance is accurate and reflects the deep understanding that governors and the headteacher have of their school and its many strengths and possible areas for improvement.
- The progress of students is monitored closely to ensure they reach their demanding targets. The school's expectation is that, given their starting points and the requirement to pass an entrance examination, students should achieve very high grades at GCSE. Similarly, in the sixth form students are monitored closely to ensure they are on target to reach the expected grades A* to B at GCE A-level. Students falling behind in sixth form or lower down the school receive mentoring from other students or staff.
- Middle leaders have a clear understanding of their role in raising achievement. They spoke positively about how the current headteacher has helped them grow as leaders and move from an administrative role into real leaders of teaching and learning within their subject areas. They monitor the quality of teaching regularly and effectively through lesson observation, work scrutiny and the use of progress information. Teachers' performance is linked to pay progression and the achievement of students is at the heart of this process.
- The pupil premium has been used largely to promote equal opportunities and avoid discrimination. For example, there have been examples of using some of the money to fund musical instrument tuition to enable disadvantaged students' access to music courses. Similarly, the school was concerned that students entitled to free school meals were missing lunch to avoid being identified by other students and that this was having a detrimental impact on their well-being and their learning in the afternoon. As a result, the school spent a large chunk of the funding on introducing a system of cashless tills.
- The school works hard to ensure equal opportunities for its students. As a result disadvantaged students and those with disabilities or special educational needs attain at least as well as other students in the school. All groups of students are integrated well into all activities.
- Parents who responded to Parent View and staff responding to the inspection survey were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school including its leadership.
- The school's excellent curriculum is broad and balanced. It ensures that all students follow a wide range of subjects, with a balanced mix of EBacc and non-Ebacc subjects. A tour of the school found students learning with equal enthusiasm in English, mathematics, science, music, art, business education including GCSE economics, humanities, playing rugby in physical education or making chocolate and orange truffles in food technology.
- A wide range of activities, often led by students, enrich their studies. The school excels at sport, for example a team from the school and Southend High School for Girls combined to complete in a full distance marathon relay at Lee Valley and broke both the United Kingdom and European records for the event making competitors the fastest European and British mixed school team ever to complete the distance. The event is run by *Save the Children* as an international event to

bring attention to the plight of children around the world. This sporting success combines with the citizenship programme to raise students' awareness of the world.

- Careers education, information and guidance have a high profile in the school. Students are made aware of post-16 opportunities in the local area and alternatives to the traditional university routes such as apprenticeships. Enterprise activities and a structured and assessed programme of financial literacy prepare students very well for adult life.
- Leaders make a positive contribution to the wider education system. For example, the headteacher is a contributory author to the 2014 Department for Education guidance on new headteacher standards, and as a member of the Southend Education Trust is the portfolio holder with strategic oversight of Southend Schools Improvement Partnership. Leaders contribute to the training and supply of new teachers in the area, through the headteacher's leadership of the research and development strand of the South Essex Teaching School Alliance. A number of senior and middle leaders from the school provide training through this organisation.
- Links with a local special school that provides for students with behavioural difficulties are mutually beneficial. The special school provides expertise and additional intervention for a few students. A link governor has been trained by the local authority in special educational needs and all governors receive a termly update concerning students who are disabled or have special education needs.
- The school finds its existing arrangements to monitor student progress work well. It has therefore made no arrangements yet to change its assessment arrangements in the light of changes to the National Curriculum.
- The attendance and progress of students studying a course away from school is monitored closely by leaders. As a result, these students make similarly strong gains as their peers.
- Governors and leaders are rigorous in ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. The Governing Body has had a direct influence on the balance of the curriculum. They support the school's vision that its students go on to play a constructive role in modern Britain through developing an understanding of democracy and an appreciation for the rule of law. Governors have offered professional support in helping leaders to explore ways to respond to reductions in funding, especially for the sixth form, but have also challenged the school about the potential impact of these changes, in particular expanding the number of students admitted to Year 7 and the sixth form.
 - Governors bring a range of technical and professional skills to the roles on the governing body. They are aware of their responsibilities regarding teachers' pay progression and the safeguarding of students. They understand the school's performance, including monitoring the quality of teaching and how it has improved over recent years. Governors evaluate their effectiveness by relating their activities to their impact.

The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.

- Attitudes to learning and relationships between staff and students are exemplary. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. The high expectations of behaviour were described to inspectors by staff and students. The system of rewards and sanctions, an example of a sanction being cleaning the dining hall, is cited by students as ensuring that students manage their own behaviour well.
- As behavioural challenges in lessons are very rare, the full effort of the teacher is devoted to students learning. Their hunger for new knowledge and keenness to understand things makes them usually very keen to contribute their ideas and to ask questions of the teacher and other students.
- There have been no permanent and very few fixed term exclusions in the past 3 years.
- Students are proud of their school and treat all staff and visitors with respect and courtesy. They demonstrate excellent manners.
- Students talk about their school with pride and are able to describe the things they like including the care and commitment of staff in helping them achieve well. They highlight the range of activities available to them and the expectation that they will all achieve at a high level. Students, including those in the sixth form, wear their uniform with pride.
- Discriminatory language is used rarely if at all. Students are encouraged to challenge inappropriate or homophobic language and are reminded that what can be heard outside the school is often offensive to some people.
- Attendance is above average, but the school is keen to make it even better. There are rigorous systems in place to monitor attendance and quickly respond to any individual issues.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school's systems to ensure that students are kept safe are exemplary.
- Bullying is rare but closely monitored by pastoral leaders. Students report that in lower years there is a tendency to 'take the mickey' or have 'banter' that upsets fellow students. This is dealt with very swiftly by teachers and backed up by assemblies. A similar approach exists to tackle cyberbullying. Students report that there is a 'no tolerance' approach to any form of bullying or discrimination and they have regular reminders of the high expectations of the school.
- The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE), religious education (RE) and citizenship programmes ensure that students have many structured opportunities to be well prepared for life in modern Britain. This is done in an effective and active way that encourages students to take these issues seriously.
- Students talk knowledgeably about tolerance and respect often initiating their own debates through offering considered opinions. For example, while extremism is not perceived to be a significant issue for the school, questions asked by a student led the school to increase the emphasis on this area through its excellent citizenship resources. Additionally, there have been links developed with a very different type of school in East London so that students can see other viewpoints and backgrounds linked to this issue.
- Parents who responded to Parent View, staff and governors were confident that children are

safe in school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Students thrive in lessons because most teachers have very high expectations of students' capabilities. In many lessons particularly, but by no means exclusively in mathematics, teachers take students beyond what is required to reach the highest GCSE grade in the subject. Students rise to the challenge of difficult tasks.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. This enables them to provide clear explanations helping students to produce high quality work.
- Excellent relationships between teachers and students enable teaching to proceed at a brisk pace which matches the students' rate of learning.
- Regular assessment to monitor students' progress closely helps their learning greatly.
- Teachers often use material from the real world to enthuse students and whet their appetite for learning. Examples included a Year 12 economics lesson where a newspaper article regarding productivity was explained by students using the economic concepts they had learned and a Year 7 RE lesson where a news story was used to get students to evaluate religious constraints on behaviour and their impact on change in society.
- Form time offers similar opportunities. For example a student asked a question regarding something he had seen on the news regarding a government spending commitment and began a mature discussion regarding the best use of limited resources. There are many examples of students reflecting on the real world enabling them to develop a critical understanding. For example, the role of propaganda was examined in detail in an English lesson where students were encouraged to challenge themselves and the teacher.
- The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding is central to the work of the school. It was seen being developed effectively in a RE lesson where students were able to talk reflectively about the concept of a 'just war'. The high quality teaching and popularity of subjects such as music, art and RE ensures that students have lots of opportunities in the curriculum to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural attitudes. This results in activities outside the curriculum such as charity sales and the 'fair trade stall'.
- All students admitted to the school are competent readers. The school recognises the challenge of maintaining good reading habits amongst teenage boys. A love of reading is encouraged through form time. Use of the library is encouraged, although often it is so popular a location that not everyone who wants to get in is able to. The school recognises that the promotion of literacy across all subjects is not always given sufficient priority.
- In a minority of lessons, greater challenge for the most able students would enable them to make even more progress.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students' attainment on entry to the school is above average. By the end of Year 11 attainment has been consistently very high over time and across subjects.

- Attainment and progress in English have improved consistently over the last few years and are both well above the national average. The proportion of students making and the proportion exceeding expected progress in English between the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 is well above that for students with similar starting points.
- In mathematics, attainment and progress are consistently very high. In 2014 unvalidated national achievement information indicates that all Year 11 students made at least expected progress and most exceed expected progress.
- There is a small minority of disadvantaged students. Across a range of subjects, they make even better progress than other students in the school and have higher attainment than other students in the school at the end of Year 11.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is in line with other students in the school and therefore outstanding. Students' achievement and behaviour is outstanding. To ensure this, staff across the school receive regular training linked to new legislation.
- The most able students achieve exceptionally well. They make excellent progress and attain very high results at GCSE and then GCE A-level.
- The school does not make use of early GCSE entry for English or mathematics.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- The school's leadership and management of the sixth form is outstanding. Sixth form leaders offer effective pastoral support for students and student progress is monitored regularly. When the need for intervention is identified, students receive mentoring from sixth form staff or attend extra study support sessions.
- Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. Attainment is high and meets the 16-19 interim minimum standards specified by the Department for Education. GCE A-level results are much higher than national average figures. In 2014, no students entered the sixth form without grade C in English and mathematics at GCSE.
- The attainment and progress of all groups of students, including the most able, those who are disabled or have special educational needs and disadvantaged students, are above national average levels. Girls, who join the school in the sixth form, settle in quickly and achieve as well as boys do.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Students are effectively involved in lessons and the teachers' excellent subject knowledge allows them to challenge students beyond the A-level syllabus. Students respect their teachers highly, value the individual support which they provide and the variety of learning styles they experience.
- An above average proportion of students stay on and complete the courses which they start. Information advice and guidance is provided for all students in the sixth form with targeted support for students who are applying to the most prestigious United Kingdom universities and for students who aim to enter the medical, dentistry or veterinary professions. A pre-university course runs throughout Year 13 to prepare students for living independently.

- Students' behaviour in the sixth form is outstanding. For example, in a Year 12 history lesson students researched information regarding the campaigns for votes for women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Students then effectively taught the rest of the class while responding to their classmates' questions.
- Attendance rates are high; students work very hard and feel safe. The curriculum offers a broad range of academic A-level courses and the extended curriculum provides outstanding opportunities with elite competitive sport and student led societies being a strong feature. British values are promoted throughout the school. For example, inspectors visited the school's law society, which was instigated and is run by a current sixth form student. Students were holding a mock trial which was attended by over fifty students. The attendance and progress of the group of sixth formers attending computing lessons at St. Thomas More High School are monitored well.

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	136443
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	449435

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
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	1061
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Richards
Headteacher	Robin Bevan
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2009
Telephone number	01702 606200
Fax number	01702 300028
Email address	enquiries@shsb.org.uk

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