

Southall School

Off Rowan Avenue, Dawley, Telford, Shropshire TF4 3PX

Inspection dates

9–10 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have created a positive, inclusive and ambitious culture. This helps to prepare pupils well for adult life.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are taking effective action to improve the quality of education that they provide.
- The curriculum helps pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects. It promotes personal development and positive behaviour very well.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the promotion of fundamental British values are a core part of the school's curriculum.
- Additional funding is used effectively to help pupils make improved academic progress. It is also used well to promote personal development, positive behaviour, regular attendance and emotional well-being.
- Governors use their wide range of skills and experience to offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff are well trained and have a secure knowledge of safeguarding issues, including those that are pertinent to the local area.
- Most pupils behave well and attend regularly. Pupils who need to improve their conduct and reduce their absence rates are helped to do so.
- Teachers usually plan activities that help pupils to make good progress. Staff often consider pupils' social and emotional needs along with their prior learning.
- Pupils make good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils are encouraged to read regularly. However, few pupils read for pleasure.
- At times, a few teachers do not accurately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge that need to be addressed before moving learning on. This limits the progress that some pupils are able to make.
- The quality of middle leadership is variable. Subject leaders do not consistently promote improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders do not always use information well to give staff a clear overview of what they need to do to further improve the school.
- Some strategies to improve the school are relatively new so they are not fully embedded. Consequently, their impact has been limited.
- The school parliament helps pupils to develop their communication and leadership skills. Pupils influence decisions in the school, the wider community and nationally.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Careers education is strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of leadership by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders are consistently driving improvements in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that information is used well to give leaders and staff a clear overview of what they need to do to meet their key priorities
 - evaluating, refining and embedding strategies for improvement so that they help leaders to continue to develop high-quality provision in the school.
- Improve the quality of education by taking further action to ensure that:
 - teachers consistently use assessment information to plan activities that help different groups of pupils make strong progress
 - staff help pupils to develop a love of reading for pleasure.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteachers, governors and staff, has created an ambitious culture throughout the school. Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils.
- Staff are proud to work at the school. The positive relationships between leaders, staff and pupils help pupils to make good progress. Leaders and staff prepare pupils well for adult life by helping them to develop socially, emotionally and academically. The school's positive and inclusive ethos ensures that staff prioritise meeting the needs of all the pupils.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are taking effective action to further improve the quality of education that they provide. Leaders and governors regularly check the impact of their actions on improving the school. However, as many strategies are relatively new, they are not fully embedded, so their impact has been limited.
- The school has a plethora of data, which is shared with staff. However, this is not always honed down to highlight the most important priorities for improvement and emphasise the key actions that staff need to take to further enhance provision.
- Leaders use professional development opportunities to encourage, challenge and support staff to continue to improve their practice. Staff value the training that they receive.
- Middle leadership is developing. The quality of subject leadership is variable, as some middle leaders are still working towards improving provision and outcomes in the subjects that they lead.
- The appropriate and evolving curriculum is broad and balanced. The wide range of subjects help pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in all aspects of their education. The curriculum helps pupils make good progress and promotes personal development and positive behaviour very well.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy residential visits, participate in many sporting activities and have access to a range of clubs which help to develop their skills and interests. For example, many pupils participate in a variety of sports clubs and also attend film, gardening, beauty, dance and computer-gaming clubs.
- Staff prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a core part of the school's curriculum. Fundamental British values link closely to the school's values. Pupils are overtly taught about right and wrong, the consequences of actions, democracy, tolerance and respect.
- Pupils learn about cultures that are different from their own and consider the beliefs of other people. Leaders and staff promote diversity and equality of opportunity exceptionally well.
- Additional funding is used well to help individuals make improved academic progress and to promote personal development, positive behaviour, regular attendance and

emotional well-being. Funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the pupil premium and catch-up funding are used in a coordinated way to provide staffing, interventions, resources and enrichment opportunities for targeted pupils.

- Leaders and staff work well with parents and carers. Regular contact, attendance at events and close working relationships between parents and staff help the pupils to do well at the school. A very large majority of parents who made their views known during the inspection believe that the school is well led and managed and would recommend it to another parent.
- Local authority officers provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. They visit regularly, focus on the school's priorities, undertake reviews, make informed recommendations and monitor the progress that the school is making against its priorities for improvement. The local authority has also supported the development of the governing body.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective as governors offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders. They have a wide range of skills and experience that they use to hold leaders to close account. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work well with leaders to strive for further improvement.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the school. Their meetings concentrate on the school's priorities and consistently focus on improving the quality of education that the school provides.
- Governors access a range of training that helps them to stay well informed. They carry out their statutory duties efficiently and ensure that resources are well managed, that additional funding is used effectively and that safeguarding procedures are robust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This aspect of the school's work is well led, and the school has a strong safeguarding culture.
- Staff are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern. Staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, including those that are pertinent to the local area. They know how to recognise signs that a pupil may be at risk.
- Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to help to protect pupils. Incidents are dealt with swiftly and robust procedures are followed closely. Staff follow up concerns tenaciously.
- Pupils feel safe and they learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils are taught about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, extremism, grooming and the misuse of the internet. They also learn about healthy relationships, child sexual exploitation and the exploitation of young people to sell drugs in 'county lines' activity.
- Appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors. Record-keeping is thorough and information is stored securely. The school's single central record meets requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know the pupils very well and usually plan activities that consider pupils' social and emotional needs along with their prior learning. This helps pupils to succeed and gives them the confidence to attempt more challenging work.
- Pupils work productively with each other and with staff. They are happy to support the learning of other pupils and they celebrate the achievements of all pupils. There is a positive climate for learning throughout the school.
- When teaching is most effective, activities are designed to help pupils with different starting points make strong progress. Occasionally, a few teachers do not accurately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge that need to be addressed before moving learning on. When this occurs, the progress that some pupils make is limited.
- Links that are often made between different subjects enhance pupils' understanding. Pupils take many opportunities to develop their communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- The teaching of phonics is improving. Leaders have correctly identified that pupils need to develop better skills in early reading in order to access the wider curriculum. Professional development opportunities have been provided across the school and these are already having a positive impact in English lessons. Better reading is also helping to improve behaviour, as pupils can now access the work more easily. However, strategies to develop pupils' phonic skills are not yet embedded in all subjects across the school.
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to support pupils' learning. Staff use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and help them think carefully about the subjects that they are studying.
- Staff work well together. Teachers and teaching assistants have a shared understanding of what to do to help pupils achieve their personal and academic targets. Teaching assistants are well deployed to help pupils to learn.
- Pupils with more complex needs are well supported. Staff adapt tasks and use sensory approaches to learning so that pupils can participate in all aspects of the curriculum. For example, in science, pupils handle feathers to help them develop their understanding of different animals. This is followed up with visits to residential centres to deepen their knowledge of animal habitats.
- Staff use a wide range of different resources to enhance pupils' learning experiences. For example, during the school's transition day, a tortoise was brought into lesson so that pupils could think about how the animal might be feeling as a new addition to the class. This helped pupils to cope with the transition process.
- Staff give pupils excellent verbal feedback. Pupils use this effectively to help them to improve their work.
- Teachers provide appropriate homework, which is set in line with the school's policy. It consolidates learning and helps to prepare pupils for work to come.
- The school gives parents clear information about how their children are progressing and what they need to do to improve. Regular reports and meetings give parents opportunities to review their child's development with staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are usually happy, polite and considerate.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils and help them to develop positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils are proud of their achievements and of their school.
- The school's parliament helps pupils to enhance their understanding of democracy and develop their communication skills, and nurtures their leadership potential. Members are elected to various positions of responsibility, including prime minister, by pupils who have registered to vote. The parliament makes representations to the Queen (the headteacher) and takes matters to the local authority when it deems it necessary. Recently, it has shaped changes to the school uniform and to the homework policy. As a result of pupils being used to having their voice heard, individuals and groups have been in contact with the local Member of Parliament and a member of the Royal Family. They are shaping developments in the school and also locally and nationally.
- Pupils' learning helps to equip them well for the next stage of their education and adult life. Careers education, which begins in Year 7, is strong. Pupils enjoy regular work-related learning opportunities, study at local colleges and benefit from a large careers fair. Pupils are consistently encouraged to think about how they can contribute to their school, their local community and wider society.
- Pupils are well cared for and they are helped to make informed choices about how to keep themselves healthy. Physical well-being is promoted through opportunities for pupils to take regular exercise. Staff also support pupils' emotional well-being effectively.
- The school's open culture promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils are safe and feel safe. They told inspectors that staff teach them how to stay safe in different situations. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and they are taught how to stay safe online.
- Staff and pupils deal well with the very rare instances of bullying that take place. Pupils challenge unkindness and they work well with staff to prevent any forms of bullying. Pupils are confident that staff would help them to resolve any issues, should they arise.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are promoted effectively when they attend alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and during social time. The school is calm and orderly.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. They skilfully help pupils to make positive choices to resolve difficult situations. Consequently, instances of inappropriate behaviour are declining.
- Leaders closely analyse information about the behaviour of individuals to help pupils to improve their behaviour. Leaders use some of this analysis to further develop aspects of the school's provision.

- The few pupils who find it more challenging to manage their own behaviour are well supported to improve their conduct. There have been no permanent exclusions since the headteacher was appointed, and fixed-term exclusions are rare.
- Pupils value their education, and most are rarely absent without a good reason. The importance of regular attendance is promoted throughout the school, and attendance has improved since the previous inspection. However, a few pupils are still absent too often.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils are making good progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Almost all groups of pupils are making similar progress from their different starting points. However, the progress made by Year 9 pupils does not match the progress made by pupils in other year groups. Leaders are changing the curriculum offer to address this.
- Over time, pupils have attained a range of accredited qualifications, including GCSEs. Key stage 4 pupils study many different subjects, including English, mathematics, science, humanities, computing, design and technology, performing arts, food technology, life and living, and personal, social and health education. Last year's Year 11 attained more qualifications than previous cohorts.
- Pupils are helped to develop their skills in phonics and they are encouraged to read regularly. However, leaders have correctly identified further developing a culture of reading for pleasure as an area for development.
- Pupils are also helped to prepare for adult life and develop their wider skills. For example, 14 pupils achieved the Duke of Edinburgh's bronze or silver award last year.
- As a result of receiving a good quality of education, including excellent careers advice and guidance, almost all pupils move on to further education or training when they leave the school. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

School details

Unique reference number	123631
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10088603

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Hopkinson
Headteacher	Abigail Martin
Telephone number	01952 387600
Website	www.southallschool.com
Email address	talk2us@southallschool.com
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2018

Information about this school

- Southall School is a small special school for pupils with a wide range of SEND. Most pupils have multiple learning difficulties.
- Almost all pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- All Year 11 pupils attend alternative provision at Telford College, Walford College, Shrewsbury College or Arthog Outreach for one day a week. Staff from the school accompany pupils when they attend these providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 32 short visits to lessons with school leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally and observed behaviour in lessons and during social time. Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector analysed 38 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The lead inspector met with seven members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair. He also met with two representatives of the local authority.
- The lead inspector considered 49 responses and 20 free-text comments to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Various documents were scrutinised, including the school's improvement plan and information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and inspectors looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Johanne Clifton	Ofsted Inspector
Linda McGill	Ofsted Inspector

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