

Inspection of Southlands High School

Clover Road, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 2NJ

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told inspectors that, in recent years, the school has not been a happy place that allowed them to achieve well. They are, however, noticing the improvements that leaders are bringing about to help them benefit from a better quality of education.

Most pupils enjoy school. They are friendly to others. Leaders have ensured that there is much less bullying than in previous years. Pupils are more confident that teachers will sort out any bullying, should it happen. Pupils said that they feel safe. Pupils know that they can talk to staff if they have a problem.

Pupils also acknowledge that behaviour is improving. This means that many pupils can learn without being disrupted by others. They can see that staff are following the school's behaviour policy with greater consistency than was the case in the past. Pupils told inspectors that there are just a small number of pupils who do not behave as well as they should.

Most teachers have high expectations of pupils. They ensure that pupils learn the curriculum and make the progress that they should. However, there are some teachers who do not expect enough from pupils in terms of their learning or behaviour.

Pupils enjoy the lessons in life skills. These prepare many pupils well for their future. Pupils are pleased that clubs have started again. They really enjoy the sports clubs. They are particularly happy that they can once again take part in the inter-school competitions.

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

This school is going through a period of change. Teachers, pupils and some parents and carers said that the school is getting better. The trust is helping leaders to bring about improvements across different aspects of the school.

The curriculum that many pupils experienced in the past did not allow them to achieve well. Subject leaders are taking effective steps to plan a more ambitious curriculum.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn. The revised curriculum plans in these subjects ensure that pupils build their learning in carefully planned steps. This helps pupils to build on what they already know. In some other subjects, curriculum plans are less clear about what pupils need to know and remember. In these subjects, pupils' learning is less secure. As a result, pupils' achievement across subjects and year groups is uneven.

Teachers ensure that pupils revisit their previous learning. This helps pupils to remember more of what they have learned. Teachers also identify any gaps in

pupils' knowledge to make sure that pupils have understood their learning before they move on to new content. This strategy is proving to be more effective in those subjects where teachers know what subject content has come before and what is coming next. Pupils benefit less from teachers' checks where the curriculum plans lack clarity.

The school's life skills curriculum is well planned. It helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils learn about democracy. They find out about the protected characteristics. Staff give pupils useful advice on their future careers. Representatives of local colleges and employers visit the school to provide information to pupils about careers and their possible next steps in education, employment or training. However, the life skills curriculum is not delivered effectively for pupils in Year 11. These pupils are not given enough time to learn all that they need to know. This means they are not as well prepared as they should be for their future lives.

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide teachers with useful information to help them to support these pupils in their learning. However, in some subjects, leaders have not ensured that pupils with SEND learn the important knowledge that they need to prepare them for their next steps in learning. Where this is the case, pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should.

Some pupils enter the school unable to read with fluency and understanding. Leaders provide effective support for pupils who struggle with their reading. This support helps these pupils to gain the reading skills and knowledge that they need to access the full curriculum.

In the past, learning was often disrupted by pupils' poor behaviour. Most teachers now deal with any instances of misbehaviour in class effectively. However, not all teachers are as well equipped to deal with the disruptive behaviour of a few pupils. This stops some lessons from being productive and harmonious.

Pupils said that the separate areas on the yard have made breaktimes much friendlier than before. Pupils' improved behaviour is evident in the reduced numbers of temporary exclusions from school.

The trust board and the members of the local governing body work well together to carry out their statutory responsibilities. They provide the right balance of challenge and support for leaders. The trust ensures that leaders benefit from a range of support from other professionals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. All staff are well trained in recognising the signs that a pupil may be in need of support. Teachers report any

concerns promptly to leaders. Leaders work closely with different organisations to ensure that pupils who need help get the support that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn or the order in which they need to build their knowledge. In these subjects, pupils do not remember or deepen their learning as well as they should. This includes pupils with SEND. Leaders should identify the key knowledge that pupils need to learn and sequence learning effectively to ensure that pupils know more and remember more of the curriculum.
- The school's behaviour policy is not followed consistently by some staff. As a result, a small number of pupils disrupt learning and pupils' social times. Leaders must provide teachers with the training and support that they need to consistently manage poor behaviour so that pupils' learning is not interrupted.
- Year 11 pupils do not have the same opportunity as others in the school to benefit from the personal development programme. This stops them from being as well prepared as they should be for life after school. Leaders should review how the programme is structured for Year 11 pupils and ensure that teachers deliver the full content of the planned curriculum to these pupils.

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.

If you are the school and you are 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	143794
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10206175
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	946
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adrian Hardy
Headteacher	Paul Bousfield
Website	www.southlands.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school makes use of three alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school converted to an academy when it joined the Mosaic Trust in December 2017.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken this into account in the evaluation of the school.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, school leaders, a range of teaching and support staff, the chair of the governing body, three members of the trust board, including the chair, and the chief executive officer of the trust.

- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, learning, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and art. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4. Inspectors also observed breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the school development plans, self-evaluation documents, curriculum plans and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding procedures and the checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding in school. An inspector also checked the arrangements for pupils attending alternative provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors also checked the views of parents in their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via the free-text facility.

Inspection team

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