

Inspection of The Stourport High School and Sixth Form College

Minster Road, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire DY13 8AX

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their learning, including in subjects that some find difficult, such as languages. Leaders set high expectations for all pupils. The extent to which pupils live up to these expectations is improving rapidly. The redesigned curriculum provides pupils with more diverse routes to follow their aspirations and interests. Several new qualifications and courses are available, such as psychology. Aspiring rugby players, attached to Worcester Warriors, can pursue a full range of courses in the sixth form alongside their sports studies. All Year 12 students recently had experience of Coventry University.

Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly. Leaders provide effective support for a small number of pupils who have difficulties managing their behaviour. Pupils live up to the school's values of respect, kindness and determination. They demonstrate this in how they treat each other and in the positive relationships with staff. The views of pupils are well represented, for example through the attendance of student leadership representatives at governing body meetings.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They feel safe in school. Almost all pupils spoken to said they could speak to a trusted adult about any bullying concerns they had, although such incidents are rare.

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

The redesigned curriculum is ambitious in its scope and range. Pupils in Year 9 now have a wider range of courses to choose from for the next stage in their learning, including in business. Leaders have designed the curriculum around the needs and ambitions of all pupils so that individual pupils can pursue different routes tailored to their future aspirations.

In most subjects, leaders articulate their aims clearly for what they want pupils to learn and the order in which content should be taught. In modern foreign languages, for example, the curriculum is appropriately sequenced. In mathematics, leaders' planning focuses on the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn. However, the features of strong curriculum thinking are not as fully realised in a small number of other subjects.

Teachers promote a love of reading well, not just in English lessons, but through other subjects and wider curriculum opportunities. Sixth-form students provide support to younger readers and do so effectively.

Teachers use targeted questions consistently well in lessons to check pupils' understanding. They ensure that as many pupils as possible are included to get a good sense of how well pupils are progressing. Leaders typically have effective strategies to check what pupils have learned in each subject. In some subjects,

however, leaders recognise there is more to do to link assessment tasks to the learning undertaken.

Leaders have considered the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the changes to the curriculum. This includes in the sixth form. In lessons, teachers make suitable adaptations for individual pupils to access their learning. A significant number of pupils with SEND continue with their studies into the sixth form. All sixth formers are given electronic tablets that support them with their learning.

There is a high emphasis on the ongoing training of teachers to enhance how they teach their subject. This is making a positive difference. There are opportunities for future career development, including for those staff who are new to teaching.

Teachers' expectations for pupils' behaviour are high. The very large majority of pupils spoken to agreed that behaviour has improved over time. They behave well because they enjoy their learning. Students in the sixth form lead by example in their excellent conduct. On the rare occasions where pupils misbehave, teachers are consistent in applying the school's behaviour policy. Lessons continue largely free of low-level disruption. Pupils' attendance levels are still recovering since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

There is an extensive programme of wider personal development opportunities and curriculum enrichment for pupils across the curriculum. Leaders and trustees describe these as being 'at the heart of the curriculum'. Pupils are given extensive impartial careers advice from a range of providers. Wider opportunities to learn a musical instrument outside of music lessons are limited, however.

Staff provide well for pupils' welfare and mental health. Leaders have appointed additional counsellors to support this work further. In lessons, including personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, pupils can consider issues such as racism and social justice. Sixth-form students were articulate in their discussion of gender in a lesson on radical feminism. Work experience, including for sixth-form students, provides placements relevant to career aims, including a psychologist's clinic and Formula One.

Leaders and governors have gone to great lengths to ensure the well-being of staff by taking account of their workload. The welfare of staff is one of their key priorities. Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development well. They are well informed about the curriculum and hold leaders to account for the decisions taken. Most parents and carers responding to the surveys agreed that provision in the school is good, although a minority disagreed about provision for SEND and behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Signs around the school remind everyone that 'it could happen here'. This is embedded in the culture, where all staff are urged to report any concerns. Staff receive extensive training. Leaders are quick to identify any pupils at risk of harm. They engage well with other agencies to secure the appropriate early help where required. Policies and procedures ensure leaders deal with allegations appropriately. Leaders and governors are well trained to recruit new staff safely. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through learning about healthy relationships, awareness of harmful behaviours and the risks of the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not set out clearly what pupils are expected to learn. As a result, checks on what pupils have learned at assessment points are not always clearly linked to what pupils have been taught. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in each subject clearly sets out the intended sequence of learning.
- A significant minority of parents expressed concerns around behaviour and support for pupils with SEND. When communicating with parents and inviting them to school, leaders and governors should endeavour to understand and allay their concerns about their work with pupils with SEND and the improvements they have secured in behaviour.

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	137162
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10227523
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1109
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	149
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Julie Holmes
Principal	Sara Peace
Website	www.shs.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 October 2018

Information about this school

- The school is a founding member of the Severn Academies Education Trust.
- The principal was appointed in January 2021.
- Several members of the governing body have been appointed since the last inspection, including the chair.
- A significant number of senior leaders have been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school uses two registered alternative provision providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause which stipulates that schools must allow colleges and training providers access to every student in Years 8 to 13 to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

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

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils, including a group of girls and sixth form students.
- Inspectors met two members of the governing body, including the chair. They also met the chief executive officer of the trust and the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors took account of a high number of responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service and to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered a large number of responses to the Ofsted staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire, but inspectors looked at the school's own November 2021 survey of pupils.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance, personal development, safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: business, English (including early reading), geography, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. They also looked at work in a number of other subjects, including in the sixth form. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector
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Geoff Renwick	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
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