

Inspection of Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls

Jockey Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B73 5PT

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 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 Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school have a keen desire to do well. They rise to the high expectations set by staff. Pupils are well cared for and enjoy positive relationships with both staff and their peers. The school's character education programme helps pupils to fulfil their potential and 'be your best self'.

Pupils behave extremely well. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and participate fully in their learning. At social times, pupils sit maturely and sensibly chatting with friends or in classrooms completing additional study. Bullying is rare and if it does occur, the pastoral team work quickly to address this.

The school's curriculum is broad and varied. Pupils can choose to study a range of academic subjects at both GCSE and A level. Leaders actively encourage pupils to pursue their likes and interests. In many subjects, pupils achieve impressive outcomes.

Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular activities. These support pupils' academic learning and musical or sporting talents. There are also more unconventional clubs, such as Lego and philosophy. Several of these activities are led by sixth-form students. A large number of pupils partake in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and many pupils are also involved in the school's upcoming production of 'Legally Blonde'.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is highly ambitious. They recognise that pupils arrive at the school with high academic starting points. Therefore, they have carefully planned and sequenced a challenging curriculum so that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding over time. This ensures that pupils make strong progress across subjects.

Teachers quickly build on what pupils know from primary school and introduce challenging content and concepts across key stage 3. In English, for example, pupils read three Shakespeare texts before the end of Year 9. This helps prepare them for the demands of studying Macbeth at key stage 4 and Othello at key stage 5. This ambition is similarly the case in mathematics. Pupils are introduced to complex aspects of surds and Pythagoras at key stage 3, and teachers build on this as pupils begin their GCSE work. As a result, pupils across all year groups are extremely confident in what they know and understand.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this knowledge well to explain new ideas or model learning to pupils. In many areas, teachers use questioning very effectively to check what pupils know and can do. This helps to pinpoint those who may need further support. In many areas, assessment is used very well. In art, for example, teachers check learning and provide precise support so that pupils' artistic skills develop successfully over time. However, on occasion, a few teachers do not

use assessment strategies as well as they could to recall prior learning or provide subject-specific feedback.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully integrated into school life. Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training and that pupils with SEND are well supported in the classroom.

Leaders have created a positive reading culture across the school. The school library is used regularly and is well stocked with a plethora of different texts. Leaders quickly identify the small number of Year 7 pupils who need support through the school's 'literacy enhancement programme'. Pupils are allocated either a study mentor or a sixth-form mentor who listen to them read or work closely on spelling and reading strategies. This helps to ensure that gaps in literacy are addressed swiftly.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils' personal development. The school's character programme and house system form a central part of school life. Sixth-form ambassadors take a leading role in helping to promote the school's 'character traits', including preparing materials for debate and discussion during form times and assemblies. In Year 9, pupils are part of a 'Cloud 9' enrichment programme. During these sessions, pupils complete various activities such as fitness and health, first aid, art and volunteering. More recently, pupils have heard from a Holocaust survivor. Pupils value these opportunities and the diverse experiences on offer.

The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is planned to ensure pupils cover a range of topics and issues such as healthy relationships and consent. In Years 7 and 8, pupils have regular PSHE lessons and speak confidently about their learning in these areas. In Years 9 to 11, PSHE is delivered through termly off-timetable days. Pupils find it difficult to remember their learning from these sessions and how they are building on what they already know. In addition, some pupils do not attend these days as often as they should.

Leaders provide effective support and guidance for pupils around their next steps in education. Pupils in Year 11 are given appropriate careers advice and are made aware of the different routes available to them. In the sixth form, leaders work closely with students to ensure that are well prepared for university or apprenticeships. Many students move successfully to Russell Group universities. Leaders are aware that there are aspects of their careers programme which need strengthening.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and that they receive appropriate safeguarding training. Staff are clear about how they should report a concern about a pupil. In addition, leaders provide a regular newsletter to staff which provides an overview of emerging safeguarding concerns.

Staff are alert to any changes in pupils' behaviour and ensure this is recorded on the school's online system. Leaders act swiftly so that pupils who need help and support from the local authority receive this in a timely way. All incidents of harmful sexual behaviour are monitored and recorded so that external agencies are involved where necessary.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through the school's PSHE curriculum, assemblies and form time.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On a few occasions, teachers do not use assessment strategies as well as they could to check pupils' learning. This sometimes means that pupils do not benefit from the most effective feedback on their work or that key knowledge is recapped effectively. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use assessment consistently well to further enhance what pupils know and remember.
- The PSHE provision for pupils in Years 9 to 11 is not as strong as it could be. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to build on what they know. Therefore, they struggle to talk confidently about key themes and topics. Leaders should ensure that the PSHE provision improves so that it is of similar strength to that seen in Years 7 and 8.

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.

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	136778
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10229061
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,220
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	322
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Charlotte Senior
Headteacher	Barbara Minards
Website	www.suttcold.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls is a selective school that admits pupils from across Sutton Coldfield and other local areas.
- The school converted to an academy in February 2012.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: English, mathematics, geography, modern foreign languages, music and art and design. Inspectors examined leaders' curriculum plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These include information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mark Howes, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Ireland	Ofsted Inspector
Gail Brindley	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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